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5 WAYS WITH RUGELACH
page 93

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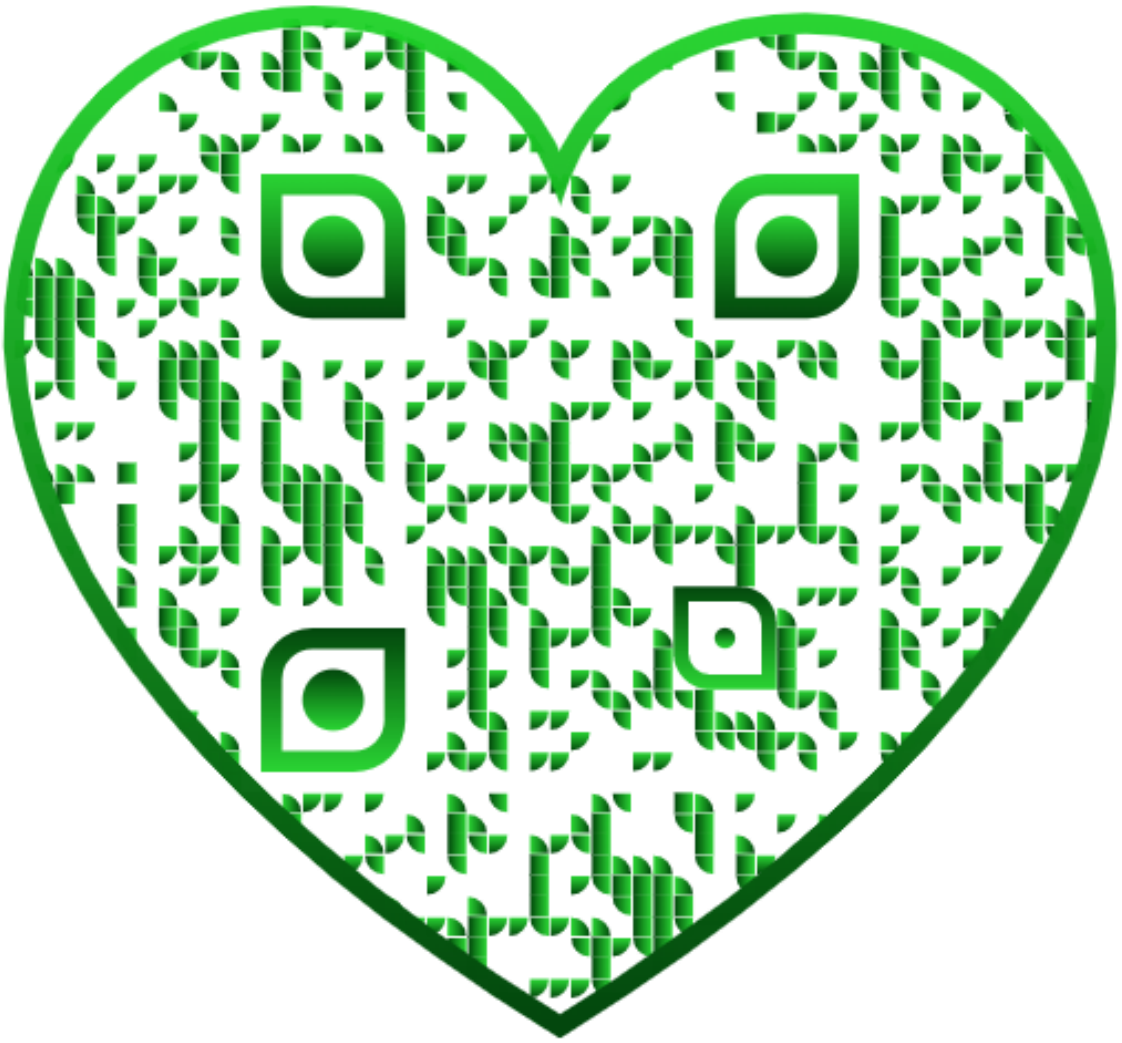

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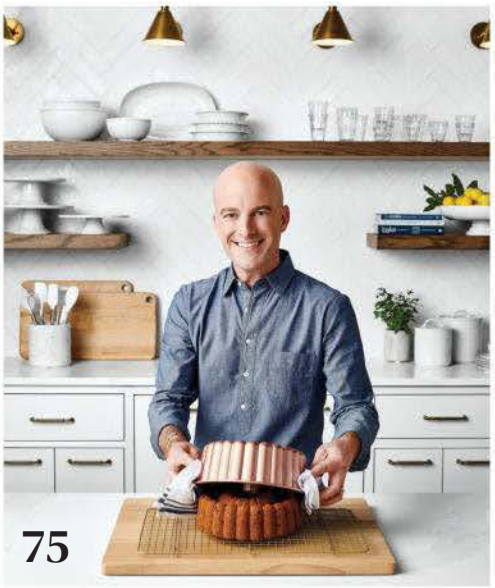

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AMANDA STABILE
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KATIE MOON DICKERSON

The Greatest Baker

Championing Change for Childhood Cancer

Colossal x B+ Foundation

Colossal Management, a nationally registered professional fundraiser whose mission is to inspire people to advocate for themselves and those in need, has significantly impacted philanthropy with its innovative approach to supporting diverse charitable causes. Since 2022, Colossal has raised over $269 million through creative online competitions, demonstrating a unique and effective method for fundraising.

"Our competitions offer a platform for individuals to cultivate self-confidence, motivate each other, and make a global impact all at the same time," said Colossal CEO Mary Hagen.

A standout example of Colossal's impact is its partnership with The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation, which is the largest provider of financial assistance to families of kids with cancer in the U.S. Since 2022, Colossal has raised over $6 million through the Greatest Baker Competition to support this organization! Joe McDonough, President of The B+ Foundation, expressed his appreciation for their partnership, "Colossal's support has given thousands of families hope and has literally saved children's lives! I wish there were more organizations like Colossal."

The B+ Foundation, named in honor of 14-year-old Andrew McDonough, a star athlete and student who passed away from leukemia, also funds cutting-edge research to find cures for childhood cancers and improve treatment protocols. "Andrew's B+ blood type became the perfect message — BE POSITIVE — to reflect how he lived his life and how he inspired others to do the same."

This amazing organization supports over 4,100 families annually, offering help with critical expenses during their child's treatment. Regardless of their parents' financial situation, every child should have an equal chance of beating their disease. Learn more at bepositive.org and colossal.org.

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Lukas
Battling Leukemia

Kylie
Battling Acute
Lymphoblastic
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greatestbaker.com | Written by Anne-Marie Pritchett | Designed by Jacqueline Guardiola

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Swans Down® Cake Flour has a lower protein content and finer granulation than all-purpose flour, which helps achieve a light and tender texture with a high rise and even shape. It's ideal for creating a softer crumb in delicate cakes like this heavenly good angel food cake.

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake

- **1¼ cups (156 grams) Swans Down® Cake Flour**
- **2 cups (400 grams) granulated sugar, divided**
- **½ cup (43 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder**
- **2 cups (480 grams) egg whites (about 16 large egg whites), room temperature**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) cream of tartar**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt**
- **2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).
2. In a medium bowl, sift together Swans Down® Cake Flour, 1 cup (200 grams) sugar, and cocoa.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium-high speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Slowly add remaining 1 cup (200 grams) sugar. Increase mixer speed to high; immediately add cream of tartar and salt. Add vanilla. Beat until medium-soft peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Using a large balloon whisk, gently fold flour mixture into egg white mixture in four additions until just combined. Gently spread batter into an ungreased 10-inch removable-bottom tube pan. Run a knife through batter to remove any large air pockets. Smooth top with a small offset spatula.
5. Bake until firm to the touch and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers 205°F (96°C), 45 to 50 minutes. Immediately invert pan (onto a bottle if needed), and let cool completely.
6. Using an offset spatula, loosen cake from sides, center, and bottom of pan, and transfer to a serving plate. Serve with whipped cream and berries. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

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from the editor

10 Years of Baking and Celebrating

As the year winds to its close, I always find myself back in the kitchen—where the scent of cinnamon and the laughter of loved ones feel like the true markers of the season. This November/December issue is brimming with recipes that will make every holiday moment more meaningful, whether you're gathering for Thanksgiving, lighting candles for Hanukkah, or counting down to Christmas with a carol in your heart.

For Thanksgiving, we've reimagined one of the table's most iconic flavors with Stuffing Biscuits—a savory, flaky bake that's perfect alongside turkey or as a warm bite the next morning. For Hanukkah, we've taken a beloved pastry and given it the spotlight it deserves with five inspired ways to bake rugelach—each one a swirl of tradition and creativity. And because no December would be complete without a bit of holiday cheer, we've re-imagined our 12 Bakes of Christmas from our first holiday issue with a collection of treats that harmonize perfectly with the verses of the famous carol.

Chocolate, of course, is a star in its own right throughout these pages. From a showstopping Chocolate Cheesecake to tender Black Cocoa Scones and the most decadent family-style Chocolate Mousse you'll ever serve, this beloved flavor makes repeat appearances in recipes that prove it practically deserves a holiday all its own. However you choose to enjoy it, these bakes are guaranteed to bring joy to every table.

Of course, the holidays are about more than just baking—they're about raising a glass, too. Brooke Bell and I are thrilled to share a sneak peek of recipes from our new book, *Every Day Coupetails*. These sparkling cocktails, paired with festive bakes, set the stage for nights filled with family, friends, and celebrations.

Nostalgia also takes center stage with a visit to Claxton Bakery, where we shine a light on how its famous fruitcakes are made. My grandfather loved Claxton fruitcake and made sure we had one every holiday. While he used them in his beloved fruitcake cookies, we also savored simple slices of the famed fruitcake on its own. Sharing this story feels like a way of honoring his tradition while inviting you to make it part of your own.

Then, a visit with Nicole Rucker is long overdue. Many of you know Nicole for her award-winning pies, but her Los Angeles bakery, Fat + Flour, is a true gem—a place where creativity meets comfort in every bite. Nicole has a gift for bringing bold, unexpected flavors into familiar forms, making each pastry feel both inventive and nostalgic. In this issue, we're honored to celebrate her beautiful new cookbook, which is as vibrant and generous as her baking itself. Her story is one of dedication to craft, community, and joy, and we're thrilled to share it with you.

This season also brings a dream-come-true moment for me: the launch of my new Williams Sonoma collection. From two beautiful pans I designed to a line of time-saving baking mixes—foundations so you can "bake it your own" way—this collection is built to make holiday baking both effortless and inspiring. I can't wait to see the incredible creations you'll bring to life in these pans, each one a reflection of our shared love of baking.

Drumstick Macarons, PAGE 74

And as this issue closes out our 10th anniversary year of *Bake from Scratch*, I'm filled with gratitude. What a joy it has been to celebrate a decade of baking together. But let me be clear: We are just getting started! The heart of this brand has always been you—our global baking community. Every recipe, every story, every success in your kitchen is part of this celebration, and I'm honored to bake alongside each of you as we look ahead to the next chapter.

Before we turn the page on this milestone year, I also want to take a moment to thank two voices who made it so memorable: Edd Kimber, for a year of inspiring small-batch recipes that prove big flavor doesn't always require a full dozen, and Rose Levy Beranbaum, for sharing from her heart in essays that leave us wanting more. Their contributions have enriched our pages and our community in ways that will be felt far beyond this year.

Wherever this season takes you—whether to the warmth of family traditions, the sparkle of new ones, or the quiet comfort of baking solo—I hope these pages inspire you to bake with generosity, creativity, and a touch of festive magic.

Preheat your ovens; it's time to bake!

Brian Hart Hoffman
Editor-in-Chief

Holiday Cookies 2025

Don't miss our largest *Holiday Cookies* special issue to date! Our 132-page 10th-anniversary collector's edition is filled with more than 75 recipes and ideas to inspire you to bake, share, and make memories. Chapters include "From Our Family to Yours," handed-down recipes from the *Bake from Scratch* editorial and test kitchen teams and our larger Hoffman Media family; "Slice-and-Bake," delivering ready-when-you-are treats; and "Glazed, Topped, and Swirled," brimming with festive adornments. "Filled, Stuffed, and Sandwiched" recipes reveal surprises in every bite, and our final chapter offers a little of everything in each of its colorful, fun bakes.

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WINTER CITRUS-CRANBERRY CAKE

Breeze through your holiday baking with the Ankarsrum Assistent Original Stand Mixer. Its open design allows for full contact with the bowl when adding ingredients, and its powerful motor means quicker mixing, so your recipe comes together faster. Plus, its many attachments are suited to create any type of batter or dough. Give it a try with this stunning layer cake that will be the centerpiece of your holiday meal.

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

- **2 cups (400 grams) granulated sugar**
- **2 tablespoons (12 grams) orange zest**
- **¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature**
- **2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract**
- **3 cups (375 grams) unbleached cake flour**
- **2½ teaspoons (13 grams) baking powder**
- **1½ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt**
- **¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk, room temperature**
- **¼ cup (60 grams) fresh orange juice**
- **¼ cup (57 grams) neutral oil**
- **Cranberry Buttercream (recipe follows)**
- **Garnish: Sugared Cranberries (recipe on page 66)**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Spray 2 (8-inch) round cake pans with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pans with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together sugar and orange zest until sugar is fragrant, about 1 minute.
3. Assemble Ankarsrum mixer with stainless steel bowl. Place dough knife in smaller hole, and position dough roller just off the side of bowl. Add butter, and beat by slowly increasing mixer speed to medium-high (6 o'clock) until creamy, about 1 minute, using scraper to help move butter around. (Butter might stick to the roller in the beginning.) Slowly add sugar mixture, scraping bowl frequently. Let mix until well combined and lightened in color, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, beating until just combined. Beat in vanilla.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on lowest speed (12 o'clock), gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture. Move roller to 1 inch away from side of bowl, and increase mixer speed to medium-low (2 o'clock), mixing until combined.
5. In another medium bowl, whisk together milk, orange juice, and oil. With mixer running, slowly add milk mixture to batter, beating until combined. Divide batter between prepared pans (about 2½ cups or 665 grams each).
6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.
7. Level cooled cake layers if desired. Place 1 cake layer on a serving plate. Spread 1½ cups (360 grams) Cranberry Buttercream on cake layer. Top with remaining cake layer. Spread remaining buttercream on top and sides of cake. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving. Garnish with sugared cranberries, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Shop our collection of Ankarsrum Assistent mixers now at *bakefromscratch.com*.

Cranberry Buttercream

Makes about 6½ cups

- **1 cup (118 grams) fresh cranberries**
- **3 tablespoons (45 grams) fresh orange juice**
- **2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar**
- **3 cups (681 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **6 cups (720 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**

1. In a medium saucepan, bring cranberries, orange juice, and granulated sugar to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Cook, stirring frequently, until cranberries have burst and mixture has thickened, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool completely. (You should have about ½ cup mixture.)
2. Transfer cranberry mixture to the work bowl of a food processor, and purée until smooth. (Alternatively, use an immersion blender to purée the mixture.)
3. Assemble Ankarsrum mixer with beater bowl and cookie beaters. Add butter; beat at medium-low speed (2 o'clock) until smooth. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until well combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed (12 o'clock), add salt, vanilla, and cooled cranberry mixture, beating until combined and stopping to scrape bowl thoroughly. Increase mixer speed to medium (4 o'clock), and beat until fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Use immediately.

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Sweet Reads

Have a holly jolly holiday with these sweets-centered titles

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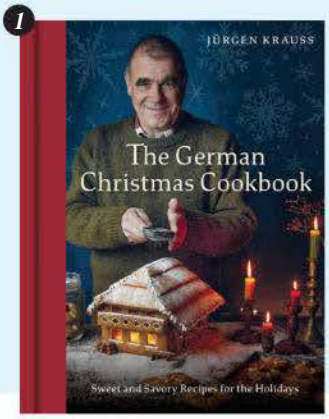

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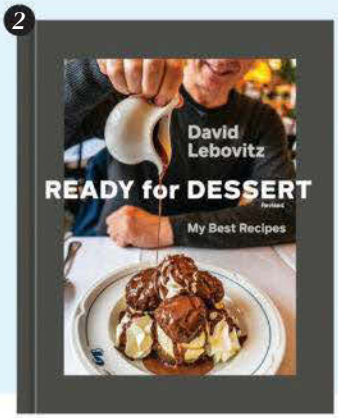

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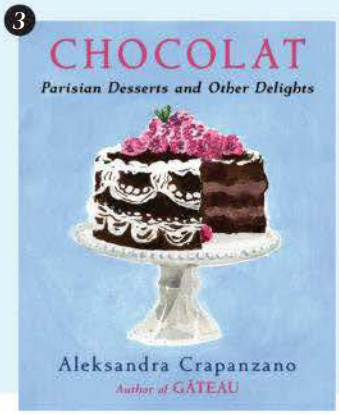

4

1

The German Christmas Cookbook

BY JÜRGEN KRAUSS

Drawing on traditions from German home baking and his own experience as a self-taught baker, Jürgen Krauss, 2021 semifinalist of *The Great British Bake Off*, paints a portrait of his childhood in a small village in the Black Forest of Germany and the cherished bakes that made the cold nights of the holiday season so memorable. Interspersed with stunning photos, his book includes family-favorite recipes, as well as for foods commonly found in German Christmas markets. From childhood treats such as Butter-Gebäck, a traditional butter cookie that's molded into assorted shapes, to intricate Lebkuchenhaus (gingerbread house) with marzipan figurines, you'll find plenty of inspiration to make your holiday season merry and bright. ***instagram.com/juergenthebread***

2

Ready for Dessert

BY DAVID LEBOVITZ

Beloved chef and author David Lebovitz invites readers to experience his favorite recipes in this revised edition of one of his best-selling cookbooks that's centered around all things dessert. His love for French culture permeates every page as he bridges the gap between French and American customs. David explains that the French often focus more on the sentiment of baking rather than creating a perfect outcome, as shown by his simple yet delectable cakes chapter. This book includes updated recipes that have been retested and tweaked, like revamping his favorite chocolate chip cookies to be softer and chewier, along with some new recipes, such as his favorite dessert, *île flottante* ("floating island") and sweet, syrupy *tartelettes au sirop d'érable* (maple tarts). ***davidlebovitz.com/books***

3

Chocolat

BY ALEKSANDRA CRAPANZANO

This collection of recipes is written as a love letter to both the history of chocolate and France's delectable desserts that use its myriad forms. Crafted by James Beard Award-winning author Aleksandra Crapanzano, this cookbook features a selection of treats that prominently feature chocolate, with full chapters diving into the vast array of variations on mousse and *chocolat chaud*, utterly luxurious Parisian-style hot chocolate. Recipes such as Financiers au Chocolat include not only detailed instructions on preparation but also interesting flavor combination ideas like orange, ginger, and raspberry. Peppered with whimsical illustrations by French artist Cassandre Montoriol, this book truly elucidates the heart of Parisian chocolate desserts. ***aleksandracrapanzano.com/chocolat***

4

Sweet Treats with Bonne Maman

BY ILONA CHOVANCOVA

Our official test kitchen partner Bonne Maman® is known for its delectably sweet jams and preserves, and its new cookbook illustrates the core values of the brand: time-honored family recipes that bring people together. Created in collaboration with Paris-based writer, food stylist, and photographer Ilona Chovancova, this book is filled with simple yet delicious recipes that highlight the versatility of Bonne Maman's curds, spreads, jams, and preserves in offerings from Hazelnut Spread Biscuits and Swiss Roll with Strawberry Jam to Courgette (zucchini) Chocolate Cake and Dutch Baby Pancake with jam and crème fraîche. With illustrated tips and mouthwatering photos throughout, this fun book will appeal to both casual and avid home bakers. ***bonnemaman.us***

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Italian Cream Cake
PAGE 18

Cannoli Cake
PAGE 17

CANNOLI CAKE

Makes 1 (10-cup) cake

We transformed the ingredients of the iconic Italian pastry into an indulgent cake fit for a party. This rich dessert uses creamy ricotta cheese in both the cake batter and the topping, along with toothsome pistachios and mini chocolate chips that create crunch in every bite.

Cake:
- 1½ cups (350 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) orange zest
- ¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract
- 2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
- 1⅓ cups (300 grams) whole-milk ricotta cheese*, room temperature
- ¼ cup (60 grams) fresh orange juice
- 1 cup (150 grams) unsalted pistachios, chopped
- ½ cup (83 grams) mini 55% cacao semisweet chocolate chips

Topping:
- ½ cup (112 grams) whole-milk ricotta cheese*
- ¼ cup (60 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons (14 grams) confectioners' sugar

Garnish: chopped pistachios, mini chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).
2. For cake: In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together granulated sugar and orange zest by hand until combined and fragrant. Add butter; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium speed until light and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and baking powder. In a small bowl, whisk together ricotta and orange juice. With mixer on low speed, add flour mixture to butter mixture in three additions alternately with ricotta mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating until just combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Fold in pistachios and chocolate chips.
4. Spray a 10-cup fluted tube pan with baking spray with flour. Spread batter into prepared pan. Firmly tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
5. Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack, and let cool completely.
6. For topping: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat all ingredients at medium-low speed until thick and pipable, 2 to 3 minutes. Spoon topping into a pastry bag fitted with a medium open star piping tip (Ateco #824), and pipe onto cake as desired. Garnish with pistachios and chocolate chips, if desired. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used BelGioioso® Ricotta con Latte Cheese.*

Read more about the collaboration between Brian Hart Hoffman and Williams Sonoma that created the unique pans for these cakes on page 75.

december

ITALIAN CREAM CAKE

Makes 1 (10-cup) cake

Despite its name, Italian cream cake is a distinctly Southern US traditional holiday cake. A sturdy yet moist pound cake-like batter is chock-full of toasted pecans and sweet coconut and swathed in a thick and tangy cream cheese glaze—true decadence.

Cake:

- **1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **2 cups (400 grams) granulated sugar**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature**
- **2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract**
- **¼ teaspoon (1 gram) almond extract**
- **2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1¾ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt**
- **1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder**
- **1 cup (240 grams) whole milk, room temperature**
- **½ cup (75 grams) pecans, finely chopped**
- **½ cup (42 grams) sweetened flaked coconut**

Glaze:

- **4 ounces (113 grams) cream cheese, room temperature**
- **¾ cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **2 tablespoons (30 grams) whole milk**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract**

Garnish: chopped toasted pecans, toasted sweetened flaked coconut

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).
2. For cake: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in extracts.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and baking powder. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Fold in pecans and coconut.
4. Spray a 10-cup fluted tube pan with baking spray with flour. Spread batter into prepared pan. Firmly tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter 7 to 10 times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers at least 205°F (96°C), 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack, and let cool completely.
6. For glaze: In another medium bowl, whisk together all ingredients until smooth; spoon onto cooled cake. Garnish with toasted pecans and toasted coconut, if desired. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

PUMPKIN PIE CHEESECAKE

Consider your Thanksgiving dessert decided courtesy of Bonne Maman®. Filled with fresh pumpkin, warm spices, and just the right level of sweetness, Bonne Maman® Pumpkin Pie Filling elevates a classic cheesecake to a spectacular seasonal delight.

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

Crust:
- 3 cups (375 grams) gingersnap cookie crumbs
- ⅓ cup (73 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

Filling:
- 3 (8-ounce) packages (680 grams) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup (220 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup (31 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- 4 large eggs (200 grams), room temperature
- 1 (21.1-ounce) jar (598 grams) Bonne Maman® Pumpkin Pie Filling

Topping:
- 1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- ⅓ cup (40 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly spray a 9-inch springform pan with baking spray with flour.
2. For crust: In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse cookie crumbs, brown sugar, and salt until well combined. Add melted butter; pulse until well combined and mixture holds together when pinched. Using the bottom of a small measuring cup or glass, press mixture into bottom and 1 inch up sides of prepared pan.
3. Bake until crust is fragrant and set, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F (170°C). Wrap bottom and sides of springform pan in heavy-duty foil; place in a large oven cooking bag, folding down sides of bag to be flush with top edge of pan. (If you do not have an oven bag, wrap pan in a double layer of foil.)
4. For filling: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add brown sugar, flour, vanilla, and salt; beat at low speed just until combined. Increase mixer speed to medium-low, and beat until well combined, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until combined after each addition. Beat in pie filling until well combined, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Pour batter into prepared crust. Lightly tap sides of pan to settle batter into an even layer and release air bubbles. Carefully place springform pan in a large roasting pan. Place roasting pan in oven, and add hot water to roasting pan to come 1 inch up sides of springform pan.
5. Bake until edges are just set, top looks slightly dry, center is still jiggly, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 155°F (68°C), 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours. Turn oven off, and leave cheesecake in oven for 1 hour with door open 4 inches.
6. Carefully remove cheesecake from roasting pan, and discard oven bag. Let cheesecake cool in pan on a wire rack for 1 hour. Refrigerate in pan on a wire rack overnight, loosely covering with foil only when completely cool to prevent condensation from forming.
7. For topping: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat all ingredients at medium speed until medium-stiff peaks form, 3 to 4 minutes. Spoon into a pastry bag fitted with a small French star piping tip (Ateco #867); pipe onto cheesecake as desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

INTRODUCING

Bonne Maman®
Pumpkin Pie Filling

Deliciously easy. Homemade goodness brought to baking.

Now available in 5 delicious flavors in beautiful 21.1 oz. jars.

Made simply, with love.

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SPICED JUST RIGHT

A little sweet and a little heat team up in these holiday cookies that beg to cozy up with mugs of hot tea

PHOTOGRAPHY, RECIPE DEVELOPMENT, AND STYLING BY
EDD KIMBER

CHAI SPICE COOKIES

Makes 8 large cookies

Inspired by mugs of warm masala chai, these cookies are infused with black tea and a plethora of spices to make a treat that's as cozy for the holidays as a big hug. If you want to make the cookie even easier, you can skip the infused butter step for a wonderfully simple spice cookie.

Tea-Infused Butter
- 7 tablespoons (98 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- 2 black tea bags (5 grams)

Cookie Dough

Tea-infused butter, room temperature
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon (125 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3½ tablespoons (75 grams) molasses
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon finely ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg

Turbinado sugar, for rolling

Lemon Glaze
- ¾ cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar, plus more as needed
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1. To make the tea-infused butter, add the butter to a small saucepan. Open the tea bags, and add contents to the pan. Over low heat, cook the butter until fully melted. Pour into a small bowl, and refrigerate until solid. Remove and allow to come to room temperature.
2. To make the cookie dough, add the room temperature tea butter, brown sugar, and molasses to the bowl of your stand mixer, and beat together at medium speed until light and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes. Scrape down the bowl, add the egg, and beat until combined.
3. Add the flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt, pepper, and nutmeg to a large bowl, and whisk together to combine. Add the flour mixture to the bowl of the stand mixer, and beat together at low speed to form a soft cookie dough. Refrigerate the bowl until the cookie dough is firm, about an hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Divide the dough into 8 equal portions (about 73 grams each), and roll into balls. Roll each ball of dough in turbinado sugar. Place the cookies 1 inch apart onto the pan.
6. Bake until the cookies are puffed and cracked, with browned edges, 12 to 15 minutes. Let cool on pan for 15 minutes. Remove from the pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
7. For the glaze, add the confectioners' sugar and lemon juice to a bowl, and whisk until a thick but pourable glaze is formed, adding more confectioners' sugar as needed. Drizzle onto the cool cookies. Let the glaze dry before storing in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

BONUS RECIPE!
Get Edd's Chocolate-Peppermint Marble Cookies recipe in our 2025 *Holiday Cookies* special issue, available now at ***bakefromscratch.com.***

London-based **Edd Kimber** (@theboywhobakes) is a baker, food writer, and TV personality who is the first-ever winner of *The Great British Bake Off*. Since his big win, Edd has authored seven cookbooks, including *Small Batch Bakes*, published in 2022, and *Small Batch Cookies*, published in 2024. He was the first contributing editor and guest editor of *Bake from Scratch* and has continued to be a frequent contributor to the magazine and a guest instructor at baking retreats. Edd has shared his unique small-batch recipes with us all year long.

Find Edd on Instagram at @theboywhobakes, on Substack (*eddkimber.substack.com*), and on his website, *theboywhobakes.co.uk*.

HOLIDAY HANDHELDS

Individually portioned and packed with savory flavor

Stuffing Biscuits
PAGE 26

Cheesy Roasted Garlic
Pull-Apart Rolls
PAGE 25

CHEESY ROASTED GARLIC PULL-APART ROLLS

Makes 12 rolls

These pillowy rolls are comprised of enriched yeast dough layered with fragrant rosemary and sage and fresh mozzarella that bakes into pockets of soft and gooey deliciousness. A generous brush of melted butter on top of these individually portioned breads will beckon everyone to the table.

Dough:

- ½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
- ⅓ cup (80 grams) water
- ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- 3 to 3¼ cups (375 to 406 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar
- 2½ teaspoons (8 grams) kosher salt
- 2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature

Filling:

- 8 ounces (227 grams) fresh mozzarella cheese*, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 4 cloves roasted garlic (20 grams), minced
- ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon (3 grams) fresh rosemary leaves, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon (3 grams) fresh sage leaves, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground black pepper

- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1. For dough: In a medium saucepan, heat milk, ⅓ cup (80 grams) water, and cubed butter over medium heat until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C).

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine 1 cup (125 grams) flour, sugar, salt, and yeast. Add warm milk mixture, and beat at low speed until combined. Add egg, beating until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 2 cups (250 grams) flour, beating just until a shaggy dough comes together and stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl.

3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 12 to 15 minutes; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams)

at a time, if dough is too sticky. Turn out dough onto a clean surface; knead 5 to 6 times, and shape into a smooth round.
4. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
5. Punch down dough. Cover and let rest for 5 minutes.
6. Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with baking spray with flour.
7. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. Roll into a 15x12-inch rectangle. Using a sharp knife or pastry wheel, cut dough into 1½-inch squares.
8. For filling: In a large bowl, stir together cheese, garlic, melted butter, rosemary, sage, salt, and pepper until combined. Add dough pieces to filling, and gently stir until well combined. Divide mixture among prepared muffin cups (about ⅓ cup or 85 grams each). Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 20 to 30 minutes.
9. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
10. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush egg wash onto dough.
11. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes.
12. In another small bowl, stir together melted butter and salt; brush onto hot rolls. Let cool for 5 minutes. Best served warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

**We used BelGioioso® Fresh Mozzarella Cheese.*

STUFFING BISCUITS

Makes 12 biscuits

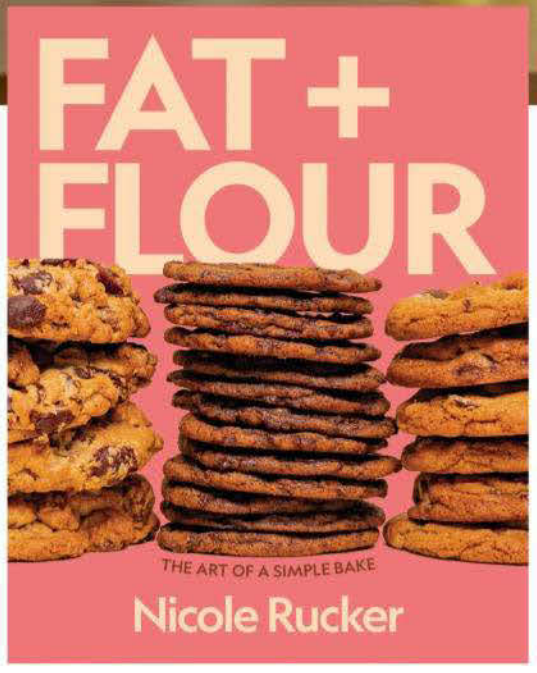
The blend of savory herbs, spices, and comforting aromatics that you know and love in traditional Thanksgiving stuffing (or dressing!) is made over into these tender and flaky biscuits. This creative twist on a holiday classic not only embodies the essential flavors of this special day but is also perfect for building an epic leftover turkey sandwich.

2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup (86 grams) finely diced celery
⅓ cup (37 grams) finely diced sweet onion
4 cups (500 grams) all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
4 teaspoons (20 grams) baking powder
1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons (3 grams) poultry seasoning
½ teaspoon (1 gram) garlic powder
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground black pepper
1 cup (227 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
½ cup (57 grams) shredded Gruyère cheese
1¼ cups (300 grams) cold whole buttermilk
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
Flaked sea salt

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a medium skillet, melt softened butter over medium-high heat. Add celery and onion; cook, stirring frequently, until tender and fragrant, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool completely.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, kosher salt, baking powder, sugar, poultry seasoning, garlic powder, and pepper. Add cold butter, tossing to coat. Using a pastry blender or your hands, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly and butter pieces are pea-size. Stir in cooled vegetable mixture and cheese. Add cold buttermilk; stir with a fork until a shaggy dough forms. (Do not overmix.)
4. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. (Dough will be crumbly and almost dry.) Pat dough into a square about 1¼ inches thick. Using a bench scraper or sharp knife, cut into fourths. Stack fourths on top of each other, and pat down to 1¼-inch thickness. Repeat cutting and stacking 3 more times. (Dough may seem too shaggy at first but will come together and be easier to work with as you go.)
5. Roll dough into a 1¼-inch-thick square. Using a 2¼-inch round cutter dipped in flour, cut 12 rounds from dough, rerolling scraps once. Place 1 inch apart on prepared pan. Freeze for 15 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
7. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto biscuits. Sprinkle with sea salt.
8. Bake until golden brown, 18 to 22 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Best served warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

PRO TIP:
Biscuits can be prepared through step 5, frozen until firm, and then transferred to a heavy-duty resealable bag to freeze for up to 1 month. Bake as directed from frozen, adding about 5 minutes to bake time.

BAKE BOLDLY



BY AMBER WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAN GASTELUM

In her cookbook Fat + Flour: The Art of a Simple Bake, *James Beard Award semifinalist Nicole Rucker proves that desserts are at their best when they're generous and joyfully imperfect*

Stepping into Fat + Flour, a small bakery tucked inside Grand Central Market in Los Angeles, California, the first thing that greets you is the smell of butter. The counter gleams with pies—apple with burnished crusts, banana cream piled high with whipped cream, chocolate chess cut cleanly into generous wedges. Nothing about the display is pristine or untouchable. Instead, it extends a kind of invitation: These pies belong to you.

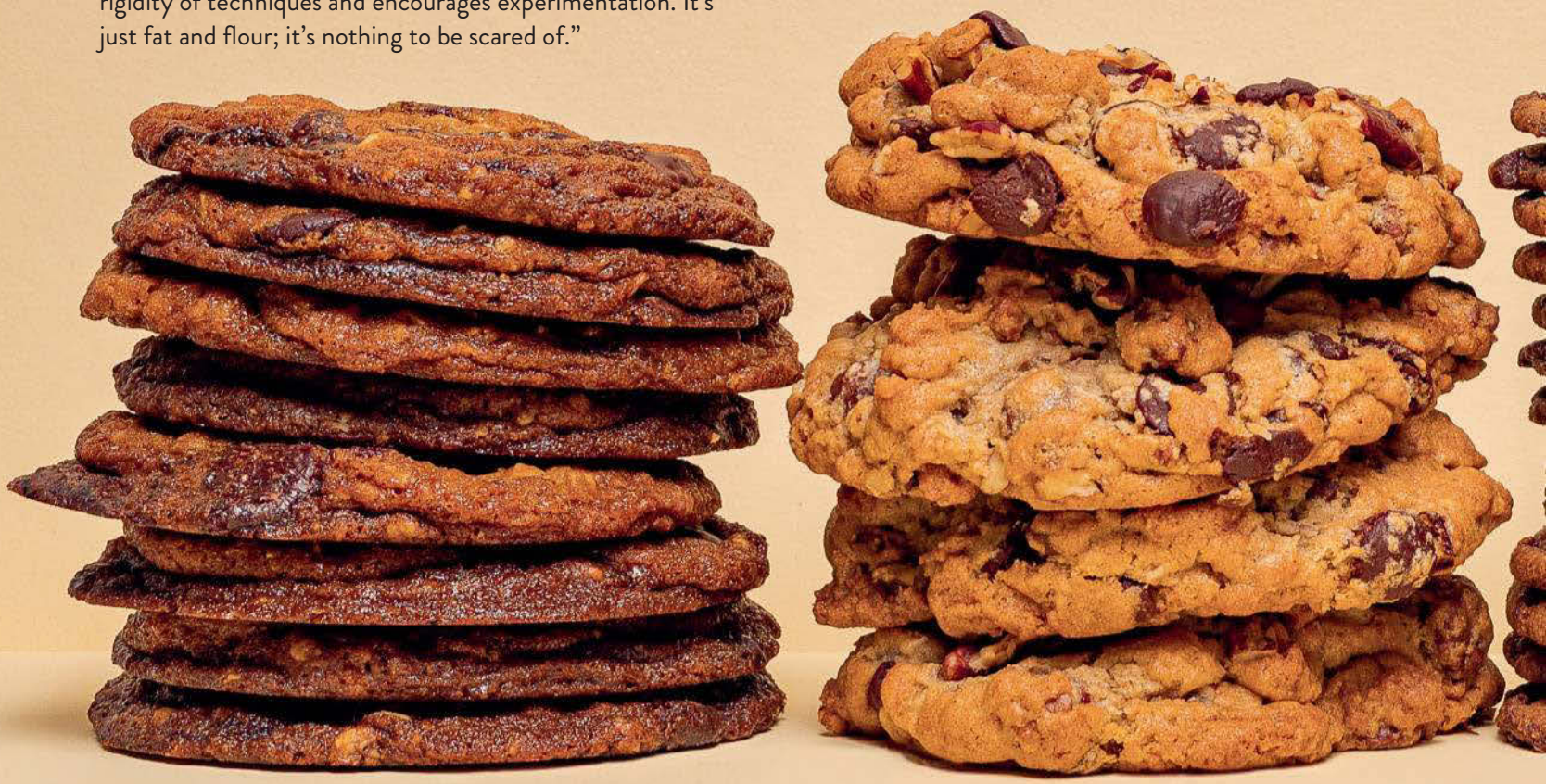
That sense of ease and generosity runs through owner Nicole Rucker's new cookbook, *Fat + Flour: The Art of a Simple Bake*. The name nods not only to her bakery but to the elemental ingredients at the heart of pastry. Fat and flour are her starting point, but the book pushes against the rigid notions of "right" technique that often intimidate home bakers. Instead, she shows how baking becomes more liberating when rules loosen, mistakes are absorbed, and shortcuts can lead to revelations.

"The title references the basis of my career—the elements of pastry typically start with fat and flour. It's also the name of my business," she explains. "I wouldn't say the book takes things back to the bare bones of baking so much as it aims to embolden people to not be too caught up with the false rigidity of techniques and encourages experimentation. It's just fat and flour; it's nothing to be scared of."

Nicole's own career has been shaped by that tension between precision and instinct. Long before opening Fat + Flour, she was a fixture at Los Angeles farmers' markets, known for fruit pies that won ribbons and attention. Her talent landed her in celebrated kitchens, including Gjusta, and in 2019, she opened Fiona, a short-lived but acclaimed bakery-restaurant on Fairfax in L.A. Even then, her reputation was tied to pies—deeply seasonal, unapologetically bold in flavor, and always warmly welcoming.

When Fiona closed, Nicole re-centered her energy on Fat + Flour, which had grown from a tiny stall into a permanent space. Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Egg shortages, skyrocketing butter prices, and fewer hands in the kitchen forced her to adapt in real time. Out of that constraint came the "cold butter method," a streamlined technique that skips tempering or creaming butter and instead builds dough from cold, sand-like crumbs. What began as a survival tactic turned into a philosophy: less fuss, more freedom.

The pandemic also led her back into the overlooked history of American home baking. She revisited the instant-pudding pies of the 20th century, a genre often dismissed



as shortcuts, and reimagined them with her own spin. In *Fat + Flour*, Pistachio Ambrosia Pie, White Chocolate Banana Cream Pie, and Chocolate Silk Pie nod to that legacy while proving that convenience doesn't mean it's any less delicious. The result is a book that bridges nostalgia and innovation, thrift and indulgence.

This willingness to question dogma runs through Nicole's entire practice. Instead of insisting on preheating ovens, she sometimes begins bakes cold, allowing heat to rise slowly and evenly. Instead of panicking over butter left in the fridge, she embraces it. What matters isn't whether the process follows culinary orthodoxy—it's whether the final dessert tastes good and brings pleasure.

"We have all forgotten to preheat the oven or take out butter and temper it," she says. "I just kind of asked myself whether this really was as crucial for every baked good as it seemed to be from years of recipe-writing. Turns out you can get away with a lot of stuff—which feels rebellious at first and then started to feel empowering."

That shift didn't come easily. Early in her career, Nicole carried the weight of exacting standards, toggling between relaxed home baking and hyper-precise professional work. But over time, she recognized that chasing perfection drained the joy from the craft. *Fat + Flour* represents her rejection of that rigidity, an embrace of messier, freer, more intuitive baking.

The recipes in the book reflect that evolution. Many are direct from the bakery—the Vegan Lemon Lavender Cookies, the Espresso and White Chocolate Cookies, her award-winning pies—while others are experiments born from years of adaptation. Photographs capture the bakery as it is, not as a staged fantasy: pies cooling in the background, aprons dusted with flour, the lived-in rhythm of a working kitchen.

"The bakery pretty much shaped the recipes since most of them are on the menu at one point or another over the course of the year," she says. "We use these recipes daily; we even shot the photos for the book in the back dining area on days we were closed."

At its core, *Fat + Flour* argues that baking is not a performance but an act of care. It resists the culture of exhaustion that so often surrounds professional kitchens and instead frames dessert as one of life's simplest, most sustaining pleasures. "I consider baking to be one of the most earnest acts a person can do," Nicole emphasizes, "so I think baking for yourself or others is a layer of closeness and an authentic act of community. It can be an act of self-love and an act of caretaking. Do with that what you will."

Nicole Rucker is the chef-owner of Fat + Flour in Los Angeles, famed for her award-winning pies and playful spins on American classics. A James Beard Award semifinalist, she is the author of *Dappled: Baking Recipes for Fruit Lovers* (2019, Avery) and *Fat + Flour: The Art of a Simple Bake* (2025, Knopf).

Follow her at @nicole_rucker and *fatandflourla.com*.

GO THERE

Fat + Flour
Culver City
11739 W. Washington Blvd.
Culver City, California

Grand Central Market
317 S. Broadway
Los Angeles, California

RECIPE TESTING NOTE

For less melting and caramelization of marshmallows on top, add them for the final 10 minutes of baking.

MARSHMALLOW PECAN BROWNIES

Makes 1 (9x13-inch) tray of brownies

Recipe excerpted with permission from FAT + FLOUR *© 2025 by Nicole Rucker. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.*

Brownies are one of the easiest bakes to make gluten-free because they typically use a lot less flour than most cakes and cookies. This GF brownie recipe has a secret gooey enhancing ingredient: the small marshmallows folded into the batter melt while baking, creating a wonderful mochi-like texture. The large marshmallows roast on the surface, creating a s'mores-like effect. Yes, you need both to achieve this perfect balance.

- **8 ounces (226 grams) unsalted butter**
- **1⅓ cups (226 grams) roughly chopped 72% chocolate**
- **3 tablespoons (42 grams) chopped unsweetened Baker's chocolate**
- **⅔ cup plus 1 tablespoon (155 grams) packed dark brown sugar**
- **1½ cups (300 grams) granulated sugar**
- **1½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) Diamond Crystal kosher salt**
- **4 large eggs (200 grams)**
- **1 large egg yolk (14 grams)**
- **2 teaspoons (10 grams) vanilla extract**
- **1⅔ cups (208 grams) gluten-free all-purpose flour**
- **¾ cup (63 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder**
- **1 cup (114 grams) roughly chopped pecans, toasted**
- **1½ cups (65 grams) mini marshmallows**
- **12 large marshmallows (84 grams)**

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a 9-by-13-by-1-inch quarter sheet pan, and line the bottom and sides with parchment paper.
2. Put the butter into a small saucepan, and heat it over medium heat. Stir every few minutes, and watch it closely to prevent it from browning. While the butter is melting, put both chocolates into a heatproof bowl. When the butter is melted, pour it over the chocolate, and stir gently until every piece of chocolate has melted into the butter.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the brown sugar, granulated sugar, salt, eggs, egg yolk, and vanilla. Use a hand mixer to beat vigorously for 1 minute, until the mixture is pale in color and very creamy-looking. It is important to beat the eggs and sugar really well, because this is how you get a shiny, flaky top layer on your brownie. Add the melted chocolate and butter to the egg mixture, and whisk until everything is combined.
4. Whisk the flour and cocoa powder in a small bowl, and add them to the melted chocolate mixture along with the pecans and mini marshmallows, and use a spatula to incorporate them, mixing just until no dry bits of flour remain.
5. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan, and smooth the surface. Gently rap the pan on the counter to burst any air pockets in the batter. Place the large marshmallows on the surface, and lightly press them into the batter.
6. Bake for 10 minutes on the center rack of your oven, rotate the pan, and continue baking until a cake tester or toothpick inserted in the center comes out with very moist crumbs still clinging to it, about 15 minutes longer. The edges will set and wrinkle a little, the large marshmallows will be browned and starting to lose their shape, and the center will still appear a bit unset. If you have beaten the egg mixture enough, there will be a wonderful shiny surface to the brownies.
7. Remove the brownies from the oven, and allow them to cool in the pan. Eat immediately, or, if you enjoy a chewier brownie, put the pan in the freezer and chill for ½ hour. Cutting the brownies while they are very cold will produce a densely packed, chewy texture and clean cuts. Store them in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 week or in the fridge for 2 weeks.

It's Time to Bake

Mastering Techniques and Ingredients Behind Every Delicious Creation

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From the Pantry: Black Cocoa
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Baking School In-Depth: Chocolate Mousse
PAGE 45

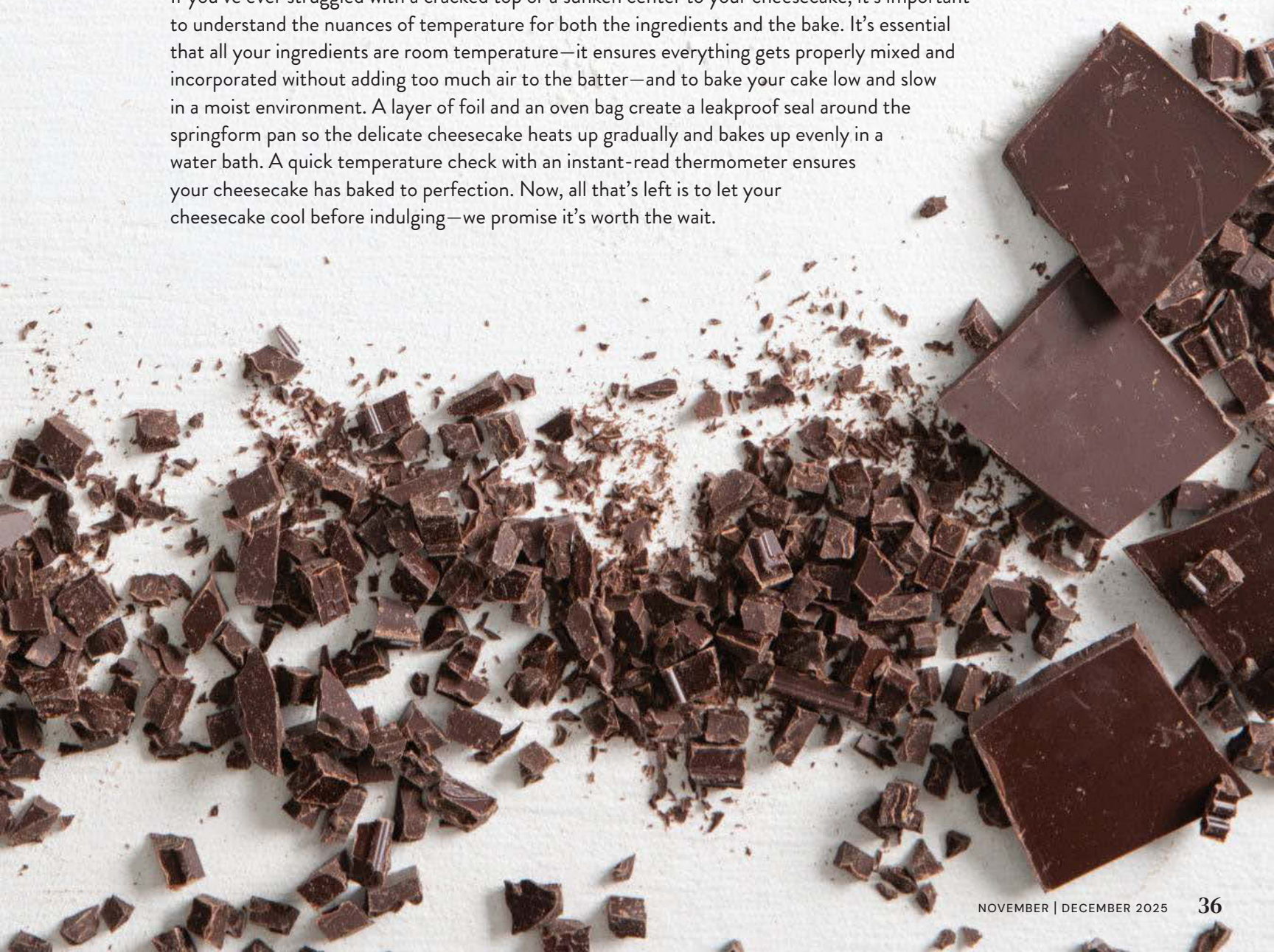
THE *Ultimate* CHOCOLATE DESSERT

Few things can truly exceed the richness and creaminess of cheesecake. But with the addition of chocolate, this luxurious cake reaches new levels of decadence.

Most people are familiar with a classic New York-style cheesecake. A sweet and toasty graham cracker crust adds a slight crunch, creating a wonderful balance to the thick layer of dense, velvety cream cheese filling sitting atop it. Just a whisper of warming cinnamon from the graham crackers effortlessly cuts through the rich sweetness and unmistakable tang of the cream cheese. With such a lush combination, it doesn't seem likely that the addition of chocolate would be enjoyable, easily tipping this decadent dessert into a dish that is cloyingly sweet and overpowering, but somehow, it only gets better.

A swap of cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies for graham crackers allows the star of the show, chocolate, to truly shine. Thanks to black cocoa powder, these beloved sandwich cookies have an unmistakably rich, deep chocolaty flavor that makes them instantly recognizable. To make the cheesecake even more tempting, espresso powder is added to the filling. Just a teaspoon is all it takes to effortlessly intensify and deepen the taste of the chocolate—in this instance, Dutch process cocoa powder and melted semisweet chocolate—without any lingering hint of coffee in the finished product.

If you've ever struggled with a cracked top or a sunken center to your cheesecake, it's important to understand the nuances of temperature for both the ingredients and the bake. It's essential that all your ingredients are room temperature—it ensures everything gets properly mixed and incorporated without adding too much air to the batter—and to bake your cake low and slow in a moist environment. A layer of foil and an oven bag create a leakproof seal around the springform pan so the delicate cheesecake heats up gradually and bakes up evenly in a water bath. A quick temperature check with an instant-read thermometer ensures your cheesecake has baked to perfection. Now, all that's left is to let your cheesecake cool before indulging—we promise it's worth the wait.



CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

A combination of a chocolate cookie crust, Dutch process cocoa powder, melted chocolate, and a hint of espresso powder result in an intensely decadent, deeply chocolaty dessert.

Crust:

- 3 cups (375 grams) cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies crumbs (about 26 cookies)
- 5 to 6 tablespoons (70 to 84 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt

Filling:

- 3 (8-ounce) packages (680 grams) cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (180 grams) heavy whipping cream, room temperature
- ¼ cup (21 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) espresso powder
- 4 large eggs (200 grams), room temperature
- 6 ounces (170 grams) 60% cacao bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly spray a 9-inch springform pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper. Wrap bottom and sides of pan in a large sheet of heavy-duty foil.

2. For crust: In a large bowl, whisk together cookie crumbs, 5 tablespoons (70 grams) melted butter, and salt until combined; add remaining 1 tablespoon (14 grams) melted butter if needed to moisten crumbs. Press mixture into bottom and 1 inch up sides of prepared pan. (Mixture may appear crumbly but should hold together when pressed into pan.)

3. Bake until crust is fragrant and set, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F (170°C), and position oven rack in bottom third of oven.

4. Place springform pan in a large oven bag, tucking ends so bag is flush with top edge of pan. (If you do not have an oven bag, wrap pan in another large sheet of foil.)

5. For filling: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth. Add sugar, cream, cocoa, vanilla, and espresso powder, and beat until smooth and no lumps remain, stopping to scrape whisk and bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed, gradually add melted chocolate, beating until just combined and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Spread filling into prepared crust.

6. Place wrapped springform pan in a large roasting pan. Place roasting pan in oven, and add hot water to roasting pan to come 1 inch up sides of springform pan.

7. Bake until edges are set but center is slightly jiggly and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 150°F (66°C) to 155°F (68°C), 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes. Carefully remove cheesecake from water bath, and let cool completely in pan on a wire rack, 1½ to 2 hours. (Carefully remove bag and foil once pan is cool enough to handle.)

8. Refrigerate in pan on a wire rack overnight, loosely covering with foil only when completely cool to prevent condensation from forming on cheesecake.

9. To serve, run a thin, sharp knife around sides of pan to loosen cheesecake; remove sides of pan. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

One of our favorite traditions!

Bakers, it's time pull out your cookie cutters and piping tips —our 2025 *Holiday Cookies* special issue is here!

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of Bake from Scratch, we're bringing you our largest annual *Holiday Cookies* special issue to date! This all-new collector's anniversary edition isn't just a cookbook—it's packed with benchmark recipes that you can adapt to your favorite mix-ins, specialty pans, or custom decorations to bake it your own. This issue will be a lasting keepsake, offering endless inspiration for your holiday baking.

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Whisks 101

Every whisk looks like wires on a handle, but each has its own specialty. Some add air, some smooth out lumps, and others muscle through thick doughs. Choosing the right whisk can mean the difference between dense cake and fluffy sponge, clumpy custard and satiny cream. Here's our guide to the whisks that deserve a spot in your kitchen and what they do best.

BALLOON WHISK: The Drama Queen
With its wide, round head, this is the whisk that puts on a show. It pulls in plenty of air, making it essential for whipping egg whites into meringue and cream into clouds or lightening cake batters. Whenever "airy and voluminous" is the goal, the balloon whisk delivers. We love to use it to fold fluffy egg whites into sponges. It's the one most bakers picture when they hear the word "whisk," and for good reason—it's a classic.

FRENCH WHISK: The Sophisticate
Think of it as the refined cousin of the balloon whisk—longer, slimmer, and narrower. Instead of whipping in big pockets of air, the French whisk excels at gentle, thorough mixing. Use it to blend dry ingredients into wet batters, smooth out cake mixtures, or create silky ganache and custards. It's especially good for emulsifying delicate mixtures where a balloon whisk would be too aggressive. For bakers who love precision, this is the whisk that keeps things smooth, glossy, and just right.

FLAT WHISK: The Pan Whisperer
Shaped like a balloon whisk that's been pressed flat, this one keeps its wires in contact with the bottom and sides of the pan. That makes it perfect for baking tasks like stirring lemon curd, custards, or pudding bases, where every bit of the mixture needs to stay silky-smooth. It's also helpful for gently folding flour into sponge batters, ensuring no pockets are left behind without adding excess air.

DOUGH WHISK: The Brawler
Sturdy, open loops make this whisk the go-to for heavy hitters: bread doughs, biscuits, and scones. Unlike a spoon that strains against thick dough, the dough whisk cuts right through, blending flour and liquid with less effort. It mixes evenly without overworking gluten, so breads rise tall and scones stay tender. Because dough doesn't cling to its wires the way it does to spoons or spatulas, cleanup is easy, too. Once you try it, you'll never mix a rustic dough any other way.

SAUCE OR SPIRAL WHISK: The Corner-Scraper
With a coiled head that bounces against the pan, this whisk is designed to keep mixtures moving. In baking, that means lump-free pastry cream, pudding, or lemon curd. Its spiral shape makes constant contact with the pan, so nothing scorches or clings. If you've ever had streaky custard, this whisk is your insurance policy.

BALL WHISK: The Pancake Pro
This modern-looking whisk trades loops for straight wires tipped with little balls. The design slips through batters with ease, breaking up lumps without overmixing. That makes it ideal for pancake batter—it eliminates clumps while avoiding too much air, which can make pancakes tough instead of tender. It's also surprisingly effective at blending cocoa into liquid or smoothing out chocolate sauces.

Find all these whisks at *bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue.*

SILICONE WHISK: The Gentle One
A whisk with a soft side. Its silicone coating makes it safe for delicate cookware (especially nonstick), but it's just as useful for bakers. Reach for it when making pastry cream, pudding, or custard directly in a saucepan—it stirs smoothly without scratching. It's also great for whipping small batches of cream or beating eggs when you want to protect your bowl from wear.

MINI WHISK: The Pocket-Size Overachiever
Small but mighty, this whisk is perfect for the little jobs. We love it for whisking together dry ingredients—flour with cocoa, spices with sugar—when a full-size whisk feels clumsy. It's also ideal for stirring up a quick glaze, beating a single egg, or even mixing up hot cocoa directly in the mug. It may look like a novelty, but you'll reach for it constantly.

Dark Magic

Unlock the deep, dusky allure of black cocoa powder, an ingredient that transforms sweets into something unforgettable

BY AMBER WILSON

BAKE WITH

BLACK COCOA

In this issue, don't miss:

Black Cocoa Cake with Vanilla Glaze

PAGE 78

Black Cocoa Scones

PAGE 110

HOW TO USE BLACK COCOA

BLEND FOR BALANCE: You can substitute about one-third of the cocoa in a recipe with black cocoa, keeping the other two-thirds natural or Dutch process cocoa. This ratio delivers striking color and flavor.

BAKE FOR DRAMA: Use black cocoa in cakes, cookies, and brownies for that gorgeous midnight crumb. Pair it with a glossy ganache or a snowy dusting of confectioners' sugar for high-contrast beauty.

TINT NATURALLY: Stir it into frostings, glazes, or doughs when you want deep black without relying on food coloring.

PAIR BOLDLY: Match it with coffee, caramel, warm spices, or bright fruits like raspberries and orange for layers of contrast and complexity.

It's bittersweet, earthy, and enigmatic all at once. It anchors flavors, deepens colors, and has the uncanny ability to haunt the palate in the best way. Such descriptors might apply to midnight itself—but here, they describe black cocoa powder, the most dramatic member of the cocoa family. One spoonful can take a dessert from ordinary chocolaty to mysterious, sophisticated, and unforgettable. How do I love thee, black cocoa? Let me count the ways.

I've always been drawn to bold flavors. Where milk chocolate is sweet and comforting and regular Dutch process cocoa is balanced and familiar, black cocoa offers something darker, more complex. Its jet-black hue comes from heavy Dutch alkalization, which strips away acidity and leaves behind a mellow bitterness. This is the cocoa that makes Oreo cookies taste like Oreos, the powder that turns cakes into midnight velvet, the ingredient that gives baked goods a visual and sensory drama unmatched by any other.

Though relatively modern in its manufacture, black cocoa's roots trace back to the long history of cacao itself. Indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica cultivated and revered cacao as sacred, drinking it as a bitter, spiced elixir. Over centuries, as chocolate spread through Europe and beyond, processing methods evolved to temper its sharpness. Dutch chemist Coenraad Van Houten revolutionized cocoa in the 19th century by inventing the alkalization process. Black cocoa is its most extreme iteration: the darkest roast, the deepest color, the boldest interpretation of chocolate's long story.

Its appearance alone feels symbolic: black as ink, a powder that swallows light. In cakes, it suggests sophistication, elegance, even drama—the edible equivalent of wearing velvet in the dark of night. Its flavor is subtle compared to regular cocoa, less fruity and sharp, with notes of earth and charcoal. Paired with sweet ingredients, it creates balance, grounding sugar's brightness with restraint. Paired with spice, coffee, or fruit, it amplifies complexity.

Black cocoa teaches balance. On its own, it can taste flat, even harsh. But blended with natural or Dutch process cocoa, it shines, giving baked goods that coveted "Oreo" note and unforgettable color. In my own kitchen, I fold it into brownies, mix it with coffee for mocha ice cream, and combine it with cinnamon and cayenne in hot chocolate. Its best trick is visual: that deep, intensely black crumb that makes cakes look impossibly chic.

A GUIDE TO COCOA POWDERS

From bright and fruity to pitch-black and mellow, each cocoa powder brings its own character—and chemistry—to the baker's pantry

BLACK COCOA: Finely milled, jet-black, and the most heavily alkalized of all cocoas. With almost no acidity, it won't react with baking soda, so baking powder is needed for lift. Known for its dramatic color and mellow, earthy flavor, it's best blended with other cocoas to round out the taste.

NATURAL (UNSWEETENED) COCOA: Pure cocoa powder made from roasted cacao beans. Bright, fruity, and acidic, it reacts with baking soda for leavening and adds a tangy, complex chocolate flavor. Available in both conventional and organic forms.

DUTCH PROCESS COCOA: Alkalized cocoa powder, smooth and mellow with low acidity. Its color ranges from deep reddish-brown to mahogany. Because it's alkalized, it won't react with baking soda, but it delivers a balanced chocolate flavor and rich color.

COCOA ROUGE: A specialty Dutch process cocoa prized for its brick-red hue and smooth, rounded flavor. With medium alkalization, it won't react with baking soda but contributes striking color and depth to cakes, cookies, and pastries.

THE ART OF CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

How to Get It Right Every Time

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATIE GRAVES
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY LAURA CRANDALL
FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON

There are few desserts that manage to feel both indulgent and impossibly light. It seems like magic, but the truth is that chocolate mousse is pure chemistry. Understanding the role of each element—chocolate, yolks, whites, and cream—makes this recipe even more satisfying. This ultimate chocolate mousse recipe is easy to follow, lusciously chocolaty, and perfect for when you want a make-ahead dessert that's as elegant as it is forgiving.

The Architecture of Air

At its core, mousse is a system of foams and emulsions and how each element balances the others. Yolks provide structure, whites create lift, and cream ensures a soft, pillowy mouthfeel.

EGG YOLKS are natural emulsifiers. When beaten with sugar, they thicken into ribbons thanks to proteins denaturing and trapping air. This structure means the yolks can support the chocolate when the two are folded together.

EGG WHITES are the lift. Proteins in whites unfold as you whip, linking into a network that traps air bubbles. Sugar, again, is crucial here: Added slowly, it helps control bubble size, giving you fine, glossy foam instead of large, fragile bubbles that pop. Overwhip, and the proteins tighten too much, forcing water out—a grainy, weeping disaster. Supple, glossy peaks are your sweet spot.

WHIPPED CREAM is body and luxury. Fat globules in cream partially coalesce as you whisk, giving both volume and stability. The fat protects air bubbles, making the mousse more forgiving in texture. Crucially, cream is whipped separately and folded in last: Too soon, and the warmth of the chocolate would melt the fat, undoing all your hard work. Just as important, don't whip it ahead of time. Without stabilizers, the cream quickly loses air and begins to weep. Whipping and folding it in immediately is the surest way to achieve a smooth, velvety finish.

Chocolate's Sweet Spot

Chocolate must be melted to flow, but if you add eggs to hot melted chocolate, you're essentially making scrambled eggs in ganache. The trick is patience: Melted chocolate and butter should feel just warm to the touch, not hot. At this stage, the yolk mixture will fold in smoothly, emulsifying without seizing.

TOO COOL
(<86°F/30°C)
Seizes and stiffens

JUST RIGHT
(around 95°F/35°C)
Warm but comfortable to the touch

TOO HOT
(113–122°F/45–50°C)
Scrambles eggs, melts cream

Fold, Don't Stir

Whipping is glamorous—the mixer doing its whirring dance—but proper folding is the unsung hero. Every stroke risks deflating the foam you've worked so hard to create. The secret is restraint: Sweep your spatula down the side of the bowl, scoop underneath, and lift gently, turning the mixture over and onto itself. Rotate the bowl as you go, repeating until streaks vanish.

There's an order, too: first, whipped yolks are added to the chocolate so the heavy base is loosened. Second, whipped egg whites. Last, whipped cream. Each successive fold is easier, preserving more air. It's the difference between a mousse that slumps dense on the spoon and one that feels suspended.

Double Duty

Notice the recipe's split sugar addition: ½ cup (100 grams) for the yolks, ½ cup (100 grams) for the whites. This isn't arbitrary. Sugar interacts differently depending on where it's introduced. In yolks, it slows coagulation, allowing for more volume during whipping. In whites, it stabilizes the foam by coating proteins, reducing their tendency to over-tighten. The result is consistency: mousse that won't collapse in the fridge.

The Cooldown

Don't rush the chill time. Those hours in the fridge allow fats to firm and the structure to set. What was pourable becomes spoonable, though still airy. The flavors also deepen; cocoa solids bloom over time, making tomorrow's mousse taste even better.

And because the mousse is stabilized by multiple foams, it will keep for up to three days without weeping. The science of redundancy—several systems working together—means the dessert is perfectly structured as well as delicate.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Makes about 8 cups

This mousse is all about balance—chocolate warmed until just melted, yolks beaten into a glossy ribbon, whites whipped to peaks that stand tall but still shine, and cream folded through to bring it all together. Each element has a role: The yolks give structure, the whites give lift, and the cream gives body and stability. The trick is patience—cooling your chocolate enough so it doesn't scramble the eggs, stopping mixing before whites or cream tip into dryness, folding slowly and deliberately so you don't lose the air you've worked for. Get those details right, and the result is extraordinary: a mousse that feels impossibly light yet deeply chocolaty, the kind you make ahead, admire, and then vanish in a very happy silence.

This recipe makes a generous amount, but if you're making it for a smaller crowd, it halves easily without fuss. Once set, the mousse keeps beautifully in the fridge for up to three days, making it as practical as it is indulgent.

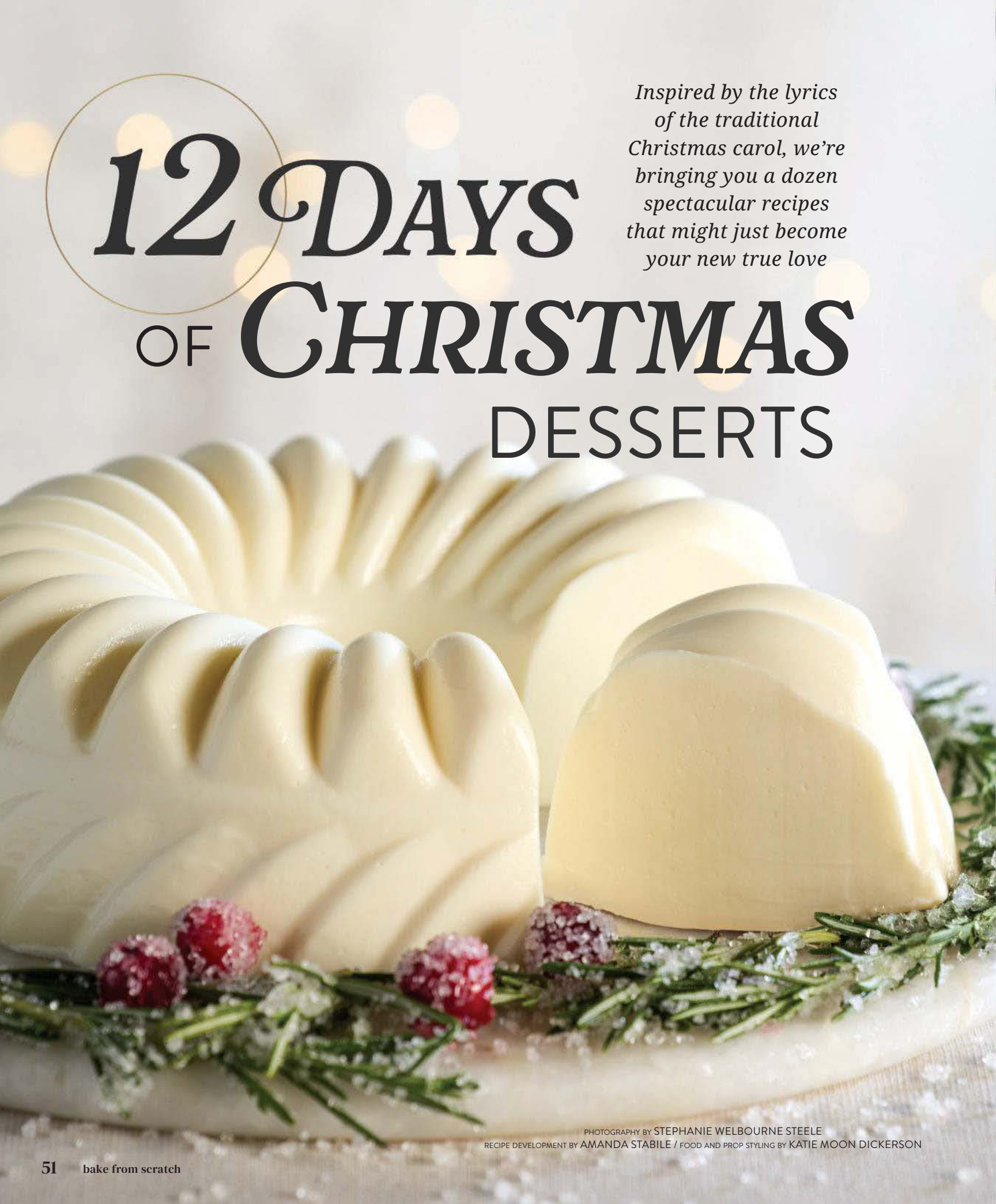
16 ounces (454 grams) 55% cacao semisweet chocolate, chopped
¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter
8 large eggs (400 grams), separated and room temperature
1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, divided
1½ cups (360 grams) heavy whipping cream
1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
Garnish: unsweetened cocoa powder, chocolate shavings

1. In the top of a double boiler, heat chopped chocolate and butter over simmering water, stirring occasionally, until melted and combined. Remove from heat, and let cool while you prepare remaining ingredients.
2. In a medium bowl, beat egg yolks with a hand mixer at medium speed until starting to thicken, about 1 minute. With mixer on medium speed, add ½ cup (100 grams) sugar in a slow, steady stream; increase mixer speed to medium-high, and beat until thick and ribbonlike, 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Clean mixer attachments. In another medium bowl, beat egg whites with a hand mixer at medium speed until starting to foam, about 1 minute. With mixer on medium speed, add remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar in a slow, steady stream; increase mixer speed to high, and beat until stiff peaks form, 7 to 8 minutes.
4. In another medium bowl, beat cream and vanilla with a hand mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Fold egg yolk mixture into cooled chocolate mixture until completely combined. Fold in egg white mixture until combined. Fold in whipped cream. Pour mousse into desired serving dish. Cover and refrigerate until set before serving, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight.
6. Just before serving, garnish with cocoa and shaved chocolate, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. b

Note: *We developed this recipe to use a hand mixer to cut down on the number of bowls and number of times you'd need to clean your equipment and mixing bowl, but it works just fine to use a stand mixer if you prefer.*

12 Days of Christmas Desserts

Inspired by the lyrics of the traditional Christmas carol, we're bringing you a dozen spectacular recipes that might just become your new true love



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE / FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON

The holiday issue
bake
FROM SCRATCH
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89 Recipes for Holiday Baking
The Essential Challah Bread
Yuletide Classic Bûche de Noël
Holiday Ginger Soup with Dorie Greenspan
L.A. for the Holidays Baking with Jesse Tyler Ferguson & Julia Tarsus

It's only fitting that the largest feature in our final issue of this year's recognition of a decade of *Bake from Scratch* is tailor-made for celebrating. We dug into the archive of our Holiday 2016 issue for the original version of this carol-inspired feature, which we updated here. Get ready to count down the days in deliciously grand style!

DAY 1

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me a partridge in a pear tree

GINGER–PEAR TREE TART

Makes 1 tart

On the first day of Christmas, our true love sends us a pear tree—and this festive tart is a delicious nod to that gift. Shaped like a Christmas tree, the flaky, buttery rough puff pastry is layered with pears gently stewed with a whisper of ginger, their delicate sweetness shining through. A final brush of apricot preserves gives the tart its jewellike glaze and a touch of extra holiday sparkle, perfect for sharing.

½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter
½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
2 teaspoons (2 grams) grated fresh ginger
1 pound (454 grams) fresh pears (about 2 pears), peeled, halved, cored, and cut into ¼-inch-thick slices
Rough Puff Pastry Dough (recipe follows)
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
Sparkling sugar, for sprinkling
¼ cup (80 grams) apricot preserves

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large saucepan, heat butter and granulated sugar over medium heat, whisking frequently until sugar dissolves. (Do not let sugar caramelize.) Whisk in ginger. Stir in pears; cook, stirring frequently, until pears begin to soften, 4 to 6 minutes.
3. Using a slotted spoon, transfer individual pear slices to prepared pan. Let cool completely before using, or cover and refrigerate for up to 24 hours.
4. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. On a lightly floured surface, roll Rough Puff Pastry Dough into a 14x12-inch rectangle, with one short side closest to you. Using a sharp knife, gently score the shape of a Christmas tree in dough. At center of short side closest to you, mark trunk of tree to 4 inches wide and 2 inches long. On opposite short side, mark center. Starting from center point at top, mark 4 (3-inch-tall) tree sections along one long side. Mirror marks on opposite long side. Once you're happy with the shape, cut out tree, and remove excess dough. (See Note.) Transfer tree to prepared pan, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
7. Arrange pear slices on cold pastry, leaving a ½-inch border around edges.
8. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto edges of dough. Sprinkle with sparkling sugar.
9. Bake until pastry is golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Brush preserves onto hot tart. Let cool for 10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Note: *Reserve Rough Puff Pastry Dough scraps to make ornaments for the tree. Roll scraps slightly thinner, cut out desired shapes, dock with a fork, and refrigerate as directed. Brush with egg wash, sprinkle with sparkling sugar, and bake until golden brown, 5 to 10 minutes. Top tart with ornaments just before serving.*

Rough Puff Pastry Dough

Makes 1 large tart or pastry

1⅓ cups (303 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
½ cup (120 grams) ice water

1. Freeze cold butter until firm, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cold butter, flour, and salt at low speed just until butter is coated with flour. With mixer on low speed, add ½ cup (120 grams) ice water in a slow, steady stream, beating just until dough comes together, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and turn dough to help dough hydrate evenly. (There will still be large pieces of butter. It is OK if a few dry bits remain.)
3. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and roll into a 4-inch square. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 45 minutes to 1 hour.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18x10-inch rectangle, lightly flouring surface and top of dough as needed. Fold dough in thirds like a letter. Rotate dough 90 degrees; roll into an 18x10-inch rectangle, and fold in thirds like a letter. Repeat procedure for a third and final turn. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. (If at any point the butter is too soft after a fold, wrap in plastic wrap and freeze until butter is firm again, checking every 5 minutes.)

TURTLE PIE

Makes 1 (9-inch) deep-dish pie

On the second day of Christmas, our true love tempts us with two turtledoves—and this pie is our sweet nod to that gift. Inspired by the classic turtle candies made with pecans, caramel, and chocolate, we've taken the indulgence even further. A creamy, fluffy blend of cream cheese, dulce de leche, and whipped cream fills the crust, topped with clouds of sweetened whipped cream, toasted pecans, and a drizzle of chocolate. For extra crunch, fold toasted pecans into the filling itself.

Crust:

- 2¼ cups (286 grams) finely ground cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies (about 20 cookies)
- ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Filling:

- 1 (8-ounce) package (226 grams) cream cheese, softened
- ⅔ cup (213 grams) dulce de leche
- ½ cup (60 grams) confectioners' sugar
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream

Topping:

Chantilly Cream (recipe follows)

- 3 tablespoons (60 grams) dulce de leche
- 2 ounces (57 grams) semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

Toasted chopped pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly spray a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate with baking spray with flour.

2. For crust: In a medium bowl, stir together ground cookies, melted butter, and salt until combined. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of prepared plate.

3. Bake until crust is fragrant and set, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

4. For filling: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cream cheese, dulce de leche, confectioners' sugar, vanilla, and salt at medium speed until smooth and creamy, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed, gradually add cold cream, beating until combined and stopping to thoroughly scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Slowly increase mixer speed to medium, and beat until thick, 1 to 2 minutes. Fold in pecans (if using). Spread filling into cooled prepared crust. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours before serving or up to overnight.

5. For topping: Spoon Chantilly Cream into a pastry bag fitted with a medium open star piping tip (Ateco #826). Pipe onto pie as desired.

6. In a microwave-safe bowl, heat dulce de leche on high in 15-second intervals, stirring between each, until fluid; drizzle onto pie. Drizzle melted chocolate onto pie; sprinkle with pecans. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Chantilly Cream

Makes about 2 cups

- 1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- ⅓ cup (40 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat all ingredients at medium speed until stiff peaks form, 3 to 5 minutes. Use immediately.

DAY 2

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me two turtledoves

TARTES TROPÉZIENNE

Makes 8 small pastries

On the third day of Christmas, our true love offers three French hens—and these French delights from Saint-Tropez feel just as festive. First created in 1955 by Polish pastry chef Alexandre Micka and popularized by Brigitte Bardot, the Tropézienne has become a beloved classic. Our version nestles silky Diplomat Cream inside pillowy brioche buns, with three luscious flavors to choose from—vanilla, chocolate, or chestnut. A final dusting of pearl sugar adds a delightful crunch against the tender crumb and creamy filling.

⅓ cup (80 grams) warm whole milk (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) active dry yeast*
3 tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar, divided
2⅓ to 2⅔ cups (292 to 334 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature and divided
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and room temperature
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
Swedish pearl sugar
Diplomat Cream (recipe follows)

1. In a small bowl, stir together warm milk, yeast, and 1 teaspoon (4 grams) granulated sugar. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1⅓ cups (167 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons (32 grams) granulated sugar. Add yeast mixture and 2 eggs (100 grams); using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined, about 1 minute. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 1 cup (125 grams) flour, beating until a shaggy dough forms; scrape sides of bowl.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until dough is smooth, elastic, and slightly tacky, 6 to 8 minutes; add up to remaining ⅓ cup (42 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. With mixer on medium-low speed, add butter, 1 tablespoon (14 grams) at a time, beating until combined after each addition (6 to 8 minutes total). Beat at medium speed until a smooth, elastic dough forms, 10 to 12 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface; knead 5 to 8 times, and shape into a smooth round.
4. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
5. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
6. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and lightly punch down dough. Flatten dough into an 8x6-inch rectangle, and transfer to prepared pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to overnight.
7. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
8. Divide dough into 8 portions (about 75 grams each). Shape each into a tight round, folding dough in on itself to create a smooth top and gathering edges into one seam. Place, seam side down, on a clean surface, and using a cupped hand, pull dough toward you. Rotate dough 90 degrees, and repeat until you have a smooth, tight, sealed round. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pan. Flatten gently with your hand. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
9. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
10. In another small bowl, whisk together 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water and remaining 1 egg (50 grams); lightly brush onto buns. Sprinkle with pearl sugar.
11. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of buns registers 190°F (88°C), 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool on pan for 15 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
12. Using a serrated knife, gently cut off top third of each cooled bun, reserving tops.
13. Spoon Diplomat Cream into a pastry bag fitted with a medium French star piping tip (Ateco #865). Pipe onto bottom portion of buns; add top of buns. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Best served same day as made. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Red Star® Active Dry Yeast.*

Diplomat Cream

Makes about 2½ cups

1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
1 teaspoon (3 grams) unflavored powdered gelatin
¾ cup (180 grams) heavy whipping cream
½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
3 large egg yolks (56 grams), room temperature
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
2½ tablespoons (20 grams) cornstarch
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
¾ cup (180 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons (14 grams) confectioners' sugar

1. In a small bowl, place 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Sprinkle gelatin on top, and let stand until water is absorbed and gelatin has fully bloomed, about 5 minutes.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat bloomed gelatin, cream, and milk over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture is steaming. (Do not boil.)
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, granulated sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Gradually add hot gelatin mixture, whisking constantly. Pour gelatin mixture into saucepan, and bring to a boil over medium-low heat, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened and bubbling, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Remove from heat, and strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium heatproof bowl. Whisk in butter and vanilla until butter is melted and mixture is smooth. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pastry cream to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until thick and cold, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight.
5. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cold cream and confectioners' sugar at medium-high speed until stiff peaks form.
6. In another medium bowl, whisk cold pastry cream until smooth. Fold in about one-third of whipped cream to

loosen pastry cream. Fold in remaining whipped cream until combined. Best used immediately.

PRO TIP: For chocolate diplomat cream, add 3 ounces (85 grams) chopped 56% cacao semisweet chocolate with butter and vanilla in step 4. For chestnut diplomat cream, replace ¼ cup (60 grams) whole milk in step 2 with 5 tablespoons (100 grams) sweetened chestnut cream.

Day 3

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me three French hens

Find our favorite Swedish pearl sugar at ***bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue.***

Day 4

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me four calling birds

Find the stamps we used for these cookies at **bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue.**

EGGNOG CUSTARD CREAM COOKIES

Makes 13 sandwich cookies

On the fourth day of Christmas, our true love shares four calling birds—and these charming sandwich cookies capture that gift in the sweetest way. Pressed into bird shapes, each pair is "kissed" together with spiced buttercream, so every cookie becomes two birds in harmony. Inspired by the beloved custard creams of the UK, our holiday version features warming spices that evoke sipping creamy eggnog by the fire, while Bird's Original Custard Powder enriches the dough, keeping it thick, soft, and delightfully festive.

- **1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **1 cup (220 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar**
- **1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cinnamon**
- **½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg**
- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **½ cup (63 grams) custard powder**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **Eggnog Buttercream (recipe follows)**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in egg and vanilla until combined.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, custard powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until dough begins to clump together.
3. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Using a 2-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough (about 30 grams each), and roll into balls. Place on prepared pan. Cover and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.
5. Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Place chilled dough at least 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Using a floured cookie stamp, firmly press cookies until you see dough around edges of stamp. (The dough has to be firm to hold the shape; see Note.) Freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.
7. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
8. Bake until edges are lightly browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.
9. Spoon Eggnog Buttercream into a pastry bag; cut a ¾-inch opening in tip. Pipe buttercream onto flat sides of half of cookies (about 2 tablespoons or 26 grams each). Top with remaining cookies, flat side down. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *If your cookie stamp is metal, warming it slightly with a kitchen torch helps release the dough from the stamp better than only flouring the stamp. Feel free to use a round cutter to clean up the edges of the stamped dough before freezing.*

Eggnog Buttercream

Makes 2 cups

- **¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract or bourbon**
- **⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- **2 cups (240 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **1 tablespoon (15 grams) heavy whipping cream**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and salt at medium speed until smooth, 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in vanilla or bourbon and nutmeg. With mixer on low speed, gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until combined and stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add cream; beat at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Use immediately.

GÂTEAU SAINT HONORÉ

Makes 1 (9-inch) pastry

On the fifth day of Christmas, our true love brings us five golden rings—and the Gâteau St. Honoré embodies that gift in pastry form. Named for the patron saint of bakers and pastry chefs, the dessert layers flaky puff pastry with caramel-glazed choux buns filled with Crème Chiboust (pastry cream that's lightened with meringue). Piped swirls of whipped cream crown the circle, adding both beauty and decadence. Though intricate, this French classic is worth the effort, balancing crunchy pastry, silky cream, and golden caramel in every bite.

All-purpose flour, for dusting
½ recipe Rough Puff Pastry Dough (recipe on page 54)
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
½ cup (120 grams) water
½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar
½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
1 cup (127 grams) bread flour
3 to 4 large eggs (150 to 200 grams), room temperature
Crème Chiboust (recipe follows)
Caramel (recipe follows)
Chantilly Cream (recipe on page 56)

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose flour, and roll Rough Puff Pastry Dough into a 9-inch square. Using a sharp knife or pastry wheel, cut around edges to make a 9-inch circle. Dock with a fork. Transfer to prepared pan, and refrigerate until ready to use, at least 30 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Draw 12 (1½-inch) circles 2 inches apart on a sheet of parchment paper. Place parchment, ink side down, on a rimmed baking sheet.
4. In a medium saucepan, bring butter, ½ cup (120 grams) water, milk, sugar, and salt to a rolling boil over medium-high heat. Add bread flour, and stir with a wooden spoon until combined. Cook, stirring constantly, until a skin forms on bottom of pan and mixture pulls away from sides of pan and forms a ball, leaving a thin layer of residue on bottom of pan, 1 to 2 minutes.
5. Transfer mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; beat at medium-low speed until dough cools slightly and is no longer steaming, 2 to 3 minutes. Add 3 eggs (150 grams), one at a time, beating until combined after each addition. (Dough will be shiny and thick.) Add remaining egg (50 grams) if dough seems too dry.
6. Transfer dough to a large pastry bag fitted with a medium round piping tip (Ateco #806). Starting ½ inch inward from outer edge of pastry circle, pipe a circular border of dough onto pastry; pipe another circular border that is 1 inch inward from edge of pastry. Refrigerate until ready to bake.
7. Holding bag perpendicular to parchment on prepared pan, slowly pipe remaining dough onto drawn circles. Using a wet finger, smooth tops if necessary.
8. Bake buns for 10 minutes. Rotate pan, and bake until fully puffed and deep golden brown, 5 to 8 minutes more. Let cool completely on pan on a wire rack.
9. Meanwhile, bake pastry until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely on pan on a wire rack.
10. To assemble, spoon Crème Chiboust into a pastry bag fitted with a small round piping tip (Ateco #802). Pipe cream onto pastry base within outer choux border, smoothing with an offset spatula.
11. Using a paring knife, cut a small "X" into bottom of buns; fill buns with remaining Crème Chiboust.
12. Working carefully, dip top of 1 filled bun into hot Caramel, and place directly along edge of puff pastry. Repeat with remaining filled buns, using Caramel to adhere buns together.
13. Spoon Chantilly Cream into a pastry bag fitted with a small St. Honoré piping tip (Ateco #882). Pipe within border on puff pastry as desired. Best served within 1 hour of assembly. (Leftover components of assembled gâteau can be refrigerated, but caramel coating, filled buns, and pastry base will soften.)

Crème Chiboust

Makes about 3 cups

¼ cup (60 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
1½ teaspoons (4 grams) unflavored powdered gelatin
½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
2 large eggs (100 grams), separated and room temperature
½ cup (100 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar, divided
2 tablespoons (16 grams) cornstarch
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste

1. In a small bowl, place 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Sprinkle gelatin on top, and let stand until water is absorbed and gelatin has fully bloomed, about 5 minutes.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat gelatin mixture and milk over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until gelatin dissolves and mixture is steaming. (Do not boil.)
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, 2 tablespoons (24 grams) sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Gradually add hot gelatin mixture, whisking constantly. Pour gelatin mixture into saucepan, and bring to a boil over medium-low heat, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened and bubbling, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Remove from heat, and strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a large heatproof bowl. Stir in vanilla bean paste until mixture is smooth.
5. In a medium saucepan, stir together remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar and remaining ¼ cup (60 grams) water. Bring to a boil over high heat, being careful not to splash sides of pan and stirring to help sugar dissolve. (Do not stir once mixture starts to boil.) Cook until an instant-read thermometer registers 240°F (116°C).
6. Meanwhile, in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium speed until soft peaks form.
7. With mixer on medium speed, pour hot sugar syrup between sides of bowl and whisk attachment in a slow, steady stream. Increase mixer speed to high; beat until stiff peaks form and bowl and meringue are relatively cool to the touch, about 5 minutes.

8. Add about one-third of meringue to cooled pastry cream; whisk until combined and pastry cream loosens. Fold in remaining meringue until combined and no streaks remain. Use immediately. (If you refrigerate it, the meringue and gelatin will set and you cannot use it again.)

Caramel

Makes about ¾ cup

1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
3 tablespoons (45 grams) water

1. In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, stir together sugar and 3 tablespoons (45 grams) water until well combined. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, swirling pan occasionally until sugar dissolves; cook, without stirring, until mixture is amber-colored and an instant-read thermometer registers 350°F (180°C) to 360°F (182°C), 10 to 13 minutes. Use immediately.

Note: *Please take care when working with hot caramel; it can cause severe burns.*

Day 5

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me five golden rings

Find the pan we used for these madeleines at **bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue.**

Day 6

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me six geese a-laying

Honey-Clementine Madeleines, PAGE 65

Day 7

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me seven swans a-swimming

Chocolate Oeufs à la Neige, PAGE 65

HONEY–CLEMENTINE MADELEINES

Makes 16 madeleines

On the sixth day of Christmas, our true love brings us six geese a-laying—and these clementine madeleines echo the gift with their elegant, egg-like form. Known as "Christmas oranges" for their peak season from late November through early January, juicy clementines bring a burst of brightness to the holiday table. Paired with honey and white chocolate, their zesty sweetness balances beautifully against the buttery sponge. Coated in white chocolate with a golden center, each delicate oval recalls the charm of a freshly laid goose egg.

- ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) clementine zest
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (21 grams) honey
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- ½ cup (63 grams) all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon (3 grams) baking powder
- ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 1 (10-ounce) bag (285 grams) white chocolate melting wafers, melted according to package directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together sugar and clementine zest until sugar is fragrant, about 1 minute. Whisk in egg, honey, vanilla, and salt until well combined and foamy. Sift in flour and baking powder; whisk until almost combined. Gradually add melted butter in a slow, steady stream, whisking until just combined. Spoon into a pastry bag, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, preferably overnight.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Spray a madeleine pan with baking spray with flour. Using a pastry brush, evenly spread spray. Freeze pan until ready to use.
3. Cut a ½-inch opening in tip of pastry bag. Pipe 1 tablespoon (15 grams) batter into deepest part of each well of prepared pan. (Do not level batter in wells of pan.)
4. Bake until edges are lightly browned and centers spring back when gently touched, 5 to 8 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
5. Wash and dry madeleine pan. Spoon about 1 tablespoon (15 grams) melted white chocolate into a well. Gently press 1 cooled madeleine into well until chocolate spreads to edges. Repeat with remaining white chocolate and remaining madeleines. Freeze pan until chocolate is firm, 10 to 15 minutes. (Madeleines should pop right out of the pan.) Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

CHOCOLATE OEUFS À LA NEIGE

Makes about 8 servings

On the seventh day of Christmas, our true love brings us seven swans a-swimming—and oeufs à la neige, *or "eggs in the snow," are the perfect stand-in. First recorded in 1651 by François Pierre de la Varenne, the father of classic French cuisine, this dessert features airy spoonfuls of softly poached meringue floating atop a pool of crème anglaise. Our version plays on the imagery of swans by shaping the meringue into free-form dollops, set adrift on a lake of dark chocolate-infused custard for a striking, timeless finale.*

- 6 large eggs (300 grams), separated and room temperature
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1⅓ cups (267 grams) plus ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- 1¾ cups (420 grams) whole milk, divided
- 1 cup (240 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 3 ounces (85 grams) 70% cacao dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites, ¼ teaspoon salt, and cream of tartar at medium speed until frothy. With mixer on medium speed, gradually add 1⅓ cups (267 grams) sugar, a few tablespoons at a time. Slowly increase mixer speed to high, and beat until medium-stiff peaks form, 3 to 4 minutes.
2. In a large shallow saucepan, heat 1 cup (240 grams) milk, cream, and ¼ cup (50 grams) sugar over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, just until steaming. (Do not boil.) Reduce heat to low, and maintain a gentle simmer. (Do not let the milk mixture boil; it will scald, and the meringues will puff too much and overcook. See Note.)
3. Using a 3-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop 2 to 3 piles of meringue into heated milk mixture (about 30 grams each). (Alternatively, use large spoons to spoon meringue into milk mixture.) Cover pan, and cook until meringues are firm, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon or large slotted spatula, remove meringues, and transfer to a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining meringue. (See Note.) Let cool completely. Store meringues at room temperature for up to 2 hours or refrigerate for up to 4 hours.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, remaining ¼ cup (50 grams) sugar, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt.
5. Strain warm milk mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into egg yolk mixture,

discarding solids. Whisk until well combined. Add egg yolk mixture and remaining ¾ cup (180 grams) milk to saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, until mixture begins to thicken and coats the back of a spoon and an instant-read thermometer registers 180°F (82°C). Strain crème anglaise through a clean fine-mesh sieve into a medium heatproof bowl or large liquid-measuring cup. Whisk in chocolate and vanilla until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until cool, at least 1 hour.

6. To serve, pour about ½ cup (about 72 grams) chocolate crème anglaise into each individual serving dish, and top each with a meringue. Serve immediately.

Note: *Be careful to not overcook meringues or they will puff up dramatically and deflate. Test with one or two meringues at first to get a feel for how fast they cook on your stovetop.*

FRENCH MOLDED CREAM

Makes 10 to 12 servings

On the eighth day of Christmas, our true love brings us eight maids a-milking—and this coeur à la crème*-inspired dessert is a celebration of dairy at its most decadent. Traditionally crafted with cream cheese, heavy cream, and sugar, coeur à la crème is molded into a heart and served with fruit. Our version heightens the dairy richness by blending Greek yogurt with cream cheese for velvety tang, deepened with vanilla bean paste. For a showstopping finish, use an ornate mold or fluted tube pan and crown with Sugared Rosemary and Cranberries.*

- **½ cup (120 grams) cold water**
- **2 (0.25-ounce) envelopes (14 grams) unflavored gelatin**
- **2 cups (480 grams) plain whole Greek yogurt**
- **2 cups (480 grams) heavy whipping cream**
- **1½ cups (300 grams) granulated sugar**
- **2 (8-ounce) packages (454 grams) cream cheese, softened**
- **2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste**
- **Sugared Rosemary and Cranberries (recipe follows)**

1. In a medium bowl, place ½ cup (120 grams) cold water. Sprinkle gelatin on top, and let stand until water is absorbed and gelatin has fully bloomed, about 5 minutes.

2. In a medium saucepan, cook yogurt, cream, and sugar over low heat, whisking frequently, until sugar dissolves and mixture is warm. Whisk in gelatin mixture until dissolved. Remove from heat, and let cool for 5 minutes.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth and creamy. With mixer on low speed, gradually add yogurt mixture and vanilla bean paste; thoroughly scrape whisk and bottom and sides of bowl. Beat until smooth and well combined.

4. Lightly spray an 8- to 10-cup mold or fluted tube pan with cooking spray. (See Note.) Pour mixture into prepared pan; cover and refrigerate until set, at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.

5. When ready to serve, fill a large bowl with warm water. Submerge bottom of mold or pan into warm water for about 2 minutes. Remove from water, and gently dry bottom of mold or pan. Place a serving platter on top of mold or pan, and invert together to turn out. (Alternatively, invert mold or pan onto a serving platter, and use a kitchen torch to warm the pan to help release.) Garnish with Sugared Rosemary and Cranberries, if desired. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Note: *If using a nonstick pan as a mold, cooking spray is OK to use since the recipe is not baked. When baking with nonstick pans, cooking spray can damage the nonstick coating, and baking spray with flour should be used instead.*

Sugared Rosemary and Cranberries

Makes about 1 cup each

- **½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar**
- **½ cup (120 grams) water**
- **10 fresh sprigs rosemary (17 grams)**
- **1 cup (110 grams) fresh or drained thawed frozen cranberries**
- **2 cups (400 grams) sparkling sugar**

1. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper, and place a wire rack on top of each.

2. In a small saucepan, bring granulated sugar and ½ cup (120 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat, and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool until warm to the touch.

3. Dip rosemary sprigs in syrup until coated; place on a prepared rack. Repeat procedure with cranberries, using a slotted spoon to remove. Let stand until dry, about 1 hour.

4. In a medium bowl, place sparkling sugar. Dredge rosemary in sugar to coat; return to wire rack. Repeat procedure with cranberries, using a slotted spoon to remove. Let stand until dry, about 1 hour. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Day 8

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me eight maids a-milking

French Molded Cream, PAGE 66

Read more about the special pan we used in this recipe on page 75.

Cardinal Slice Cake,
PAGE 71

Day 9

On the ninth day of Christmas,
my true love gave to me
nine ladies dancing

Day 10

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me ten lords a-leaping

Tipsy Laird Trifle,
PAGE 71

Piped Red Velvet Cookies, PAGE 72

DAY 11

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me eleven pipers piping

CARDINAL SLICE CAKE

Makes about 6 servings

On the ninth day of Christmas, our true love brings us nine ladies dancing—and this elegant Austrian layered cake feels just as lively. With its crisp meringue crust, airy ladyfingers, and velvety cream filling, each bite moves gracefully between textures. Traditionally filled with vanilla or coffee cream, our version adds a splash of bourbon for caramel, spice, and toasted vanilla notes that waltz beautifully with the sweet, marshmallow-like meringue. A true showpiece, it's a dessert meant to dazzle.

Meringue:

- **½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar**
- **3 large egg whites (90 grams), room temperature**
- **2 teaspoons (6 grams) cornstarch**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**

Ladyfingers:

- **3 large egg yolks (56 grams), room temperature**
- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**
- **¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract**
- **½ cup (62 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **2 tablespoons (16 grams) cornstarch**
- **Confectioners' sugar, for dusting**

Filling:

- **1 tablespoon (15 grams) water**
- **1½ teaspoons (4 grams) unflavored powdered gelatin**
- **1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream**
- **⅓ cup (40 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste**
- **1 tablespoon (15 grams) bourbon (optional)**

Garnish: confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Starting 2 inches in from one side of a large sheet of parchment paper, draw 3 (12-inch-long) lines 1¼ inches apart. Leave a 2-inch gap, and repeat with 3 more lines for a total of 6 lines. Place parchment, ink side down, on a rimmed baking sheet.

2. For meringue: In the heatproof bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together granulated sugar, egg whites, cornstarch, and salt. Place bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Cook, whisking occasionally, until an instant-read thermometer registers 145°F (63°C).

3. Carefully return bowl to stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat at high speed until mixture has cooled and tripled in volume, 4 to 5 minutes.

4. Spoon meringue into a pastry bag fitted with a ¾-inch round piping tip (Ateco #809). Pipe strips of meringue along drawn lines on prepared pan. Pipe dollops of meringue between ends of each group of lines to connect them. (You should end up with two meringue rectangles with a lengthwise line of meringue through the center of each.)

5. For ladyfingers: In same bowl of stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg yolks, egg, and granulated sugar at medium-high speed until pale, tripled in volume, and ribbonlike, 5 to 7 minutes. Beat in vanilla extract. Sift flour and cornstarch on top, and gently fold with a rubber spatula until combined. Spoon batter into a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch round piping tip (Ateco #806). Pipe batter in spaces between connected meringue lines, using all batter. (Lines of batter will be taller than meringue and should be thick enough to not spread or fall over.) Dust with confectioners' sugar.

6. Bake until ladyfingers are firm and lightly browned and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 15 to 20 minutes. (Meringue will still seem soft.) Turn oven off, and let cool in oven with door closed for 1 hour.

7. For filling: In a small microwave-safe bowl, place 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Sprinkle gelatin on top, and let stand until water is absorbed and gelatin has fully bloomed, about 5 minutes. Heat on high in 5-second intervals until gelatin is melted. Let cool while whipping cream.

8. Clean bowl of stand mixer and whisk attachment. Using the whisk attachment, beat cold cream, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla bean paste at medium-high speed until soft peaks form, 3 to 5 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add melted gelatin mixture and bourbon (if using), and beat until stiff peaks form.

9. Cut parchment between sections of ladyfingers to separate. Carefully peel off parchment. Place 1 ladyfinger layer, crisp side down, on a serving platter. Spread filling onto ladyfinger. Place remaining ladyfinger layer, crisp side up, on filling. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving or up to overnight. Garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired. Slice with a serrated knife. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Note: *Search "Cardinal Slice" at* bakefromscratch.com *for a step-by-step video of how to make and assemble this cake.*

TIPSY LAIRD TRIFLE

Makes 10 to 12 servings

On the tenth day of Christmas, our true love brings us ten lords a-leaping—and this boozy Scottish trifle, known as Tipsy Laird, is every bit as grand. Often served to celebrate the holidays, this Scottish take on a traditional English trifle prominently features two beloved Scottish ingredients: raspberries and whisky. Layers of thick custard are paired with whisky-soaked sponge cake, as opposed to the traditional sherry used in English trifle, to add a complex blend of warm caramelly flavor, and tart raspberry preserves create a delightfully bright note to fully balance the blend of flavors. The decadent, boozy nature of this dessert led many to infer that its name is meant to poke fun at upper class folks ("laird" is Scottish for "lord"), who were known to indulge in lavish desserts after hearty meals.

- **5 large eggs (250 grams), room temperature**
- **⅔ cup (133 grams) granulated sugar**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) almond extract**
- **¾ cup (94 grams) unbleached cake flour**
- **6 tablespoons (48 grams) cornstarch**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt**
- **¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
- **Crème Anglaise (recipe follows)**
- **4½ tablespoons (68 grams) whisky or bourbon**
- **1 cup (320 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (40 grams) raspberry preserves*, divided**
- **Chantilly Cream (recipe on page 56)**
- **Garnish: sliced almonds**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line bottoms of 2 (9-inch) round cake pans with parchment paper. (Do not spray or butter pans.)

2. In the heatproof bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together eggs, sugar, and extracts. Place bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Cook, whisking occasionally, until an instant-read thermometer registers 110°F (43°C).
3. Carefully return bowl to stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat at high speed until thick, tripled in volume, and ribbonlike, about 3 minutes.
4. In a small bowl, sift together flour, cornstarch, and salt. Add flour mixture to egg mixture in two additions, gently folding with a large balloon whisk just until combined after each addition.
5. Transfer 1 cup (75 grams) batter to another small bowl; whisk in melted butter until combined. Add butter mixture to remaining batter in two additions, folding with balloon whisk just until combined after each addition. Divide batter between prepared pans.
6. Bake until golden brown and cake layers spring back when gently pressed, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely in pans on a wire rack.
7. Using a thin knife or offset spatula, loosen cooled cake layers from sides of pan, and remove from pan. Using a serrated knife, cut layers into 1-inch squares.
8. Spread one-fourth of Crème Anglaise (about ⅔ cup or 130 grams) in bottom of an 8-cup trifle bowl. Arrange about one-third of cake cubes on Crème Anglaise in an even layer. Drizzle 1½ tablespoons (22.5 grams) whisky or bourbon onto cake. Dollop ¼ cup (80 grams) preserves onto cake. Repeat layers with remaining Crème Anglaise, remaining cake, remaining whisky or bourbon, and ¾ cup (240 grams) preserves. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
9. Just before serving, top with Chantilly Cream and remaining 2 tablespoons (40 grams) preserves. Garnish with sliced almonds, if desired. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Bonne Maman® Raspberry Preserves.*

Crème Anglaise

Makes about 2½ cups

- **¾ cup (180 grams) heavy whipping cream**
- **¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk**
- **6 tablespoons (72 grams) granulated sugar, divided**
- **1½ teaspoons (9 grams) vanilla bean paste**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **4 large egg yolks (76 grams), room temperature**

1. In a medium saucepan, heat cream, milk, 3 tablespoons (36 grams) sugar, vanilla bean paste, and salt over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, just until steaming. (Do not boil.)
2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks and remaining 3 tablespoons (36 grams) sugar.
3. Slowly add half of warm cream mixture to egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly. Whisk egg yolk mixture into remaining warm cream mixture in pan. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, until mixture starts to thicken and coats the back of a spoon and an instant-read thermometer registers 180°F (82°C).
4. Immediately strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium heatproof bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of sauce, and refrigerate until cold, at least 3 hours, or for up to 4 days.

PIPED RED VELVET COOKIES

Makes 20 to 24 cookies

On the eleventh day of Christmas, our true love brings us eleven pipers piping—and these red velvet butter cookies strike just the right note with their festive hue and subtle chocolate flavor. Shaped into rings and crowned with edible pearls and sparkling sugar to mimic holiday wreaths, they sing with holiday spirit—though you can pipe any shape or design that suits your tune.

- **1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **1¼ cups (150 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) red gel food coloring**
- **2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **2 tablespoons (10 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt**
- **Garnish: pearl dragées, sparkling sugar**

1. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and confectioners' sugar at medium-high speed until light and creamy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in egg until combined, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla and food coloring.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until just combined and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. (Dough will be slightly stiff but soft enough to pipe.) Spoon dough into a pastry bag fitted with a medium open star piping tip (Ateco #825). Pipe dough into 2½-inch circles 2 inches apart on prepared pans. (See Note.) Garnish with dragées and sparkling sugar, if desired. Freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
5. Bake until edges are lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *This dough is soft enough to pipe but firm enough to hold its shape during baking. If you find that it's too stiff to pipe, add 1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 grams) whole milk, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, to the dough. Dough will spread more in the oven but will be easier to pipe.*

Day 12

On the twelfth day of Christmas,
my true love gave to me
twelve drummers drumming

DRUMSTICK MACARONS

Makes about 20 macarons

On the twelfth day of Christmas, our true love brings us twelve drummers drumming—and these macaron ice cream sandwiches beat to that rhythm with every bite. Inspired by the nostalgic Drumstick cone, they layer vanilla ice cream between crunchy, chewy macarons flavored with a hint of butter extract to mimic a waffle cone. A dip in glossy chocolate and a scattering of salty peanuts strike the final note, turning this playful mash-up of French elegance and childhood favorite into a celebratory encore.

1 (1½-quart) container (780 grams) vanilla ice cream (6 cups), softened enough to spread
1⅔ cups (160 grams) superfine blanched almond flour*
1¼ cups (150 grams) confectioners' sugar
5 large egg whites (150 grams), divided
¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
¾ teaspoon (3 grams) butter extract
10 ounces (283 grams) semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly
Finely chopped peanuts, for sprinkling

1. Line a 13½x8½-inch rimmed baking sheet with plastic wrap. Spread ice cream in an even layer in prepared pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and freeze until firm, at least 1 hour, or up to overnight.
2. Using a permanent marker, draw 2½-inch circles 1 inch apart on 4 sheets of parchment paper. Place parchment, ink side down, on 4 rimmed baking sheets. (Alternatively, line 4 baking sheets with silicone macaron baking mats.)
3. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse almond flour and confectioners' sugar until fully combined. Transfer to a large bowl. Add 1 egg white (30 grams); fold until combined. (It may be difficult to stir at first but will come together.)
4. In the heatproof bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together granulated sugar and remaining 4 egg whites (120 grams) until frothy. Place bowl over a small saucepan of simmering water. Cook, whisking constantly, until sugar dissolves and an instant-read thermometer registers 140°F (60°C), about 2 minutes.
5. Carefully return bowl to stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat at high speed until stiff peaks form, 3 to 4 minutes. Add butter extract, and beat until mixture is cooled and stiff peaks form, 4 to 5 minutes.
6. Add about 1 cup (80 grams) egg white mixture to flour mixture; stir vigorously until combined. Add remaining egg white mixture, and fold until mixture is ribbonlike. (Mixture should be thick and slowly but freely fall off the spatula in a "V" shape; when you drag the spatula through the batter, it should move like lava and slowly come back together. To get this consistency, it may require vigorous stirring to remove some air from the meringue and loosen the batter.)
7. Transfer batter to a pastry bag fitted with a medium round piping tip (Ateco #804). Holding piping tip perpendicular to pan, pipe batter within drawn circles on prepared pans, applying pressure and leaving tip stationary until batter just reaches drawn circle. Move and lift piping tip in a quick circular motion as you finish piping each macaron shell to prevent a point from forming on top.
8. Slam pans vigorously on counter 5 to 7 times to release air bubbles. Refill pastry bag with remaining batter, and repeat. Let batter stand at room temperature until a skin forms on top, 40 to 50 minutes. (This time frame could vary depending on the humidity of your kitchen. Batter should feel dry to the touch and should not stick to your finger.)
9. Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C).
10. Bake until shells are firm but have a slight wobble to the touch, 15 to 18 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Let cool completely on pans on wire racks.
11. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
12. To assemble: Using a 2½-inch round cutter, cut rounds from ice cream. Place on flat side of half of macaron shells. Top with remaining macaron shells, flat side down. Dip macarons halfway into melted chocolate, letting excess drip off; sprinkle with peanuts. Place on prepared pan. Freeze until firm before serving, about 1 hour. Freeze in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

**We used Bob's Red Mill® Almond Flour.*

Tradition, Memory, and a Little Baking Magic

Walk into Brian Hart Hoffman's kitchen and you'll immediately sense what drives him: nostalgia, joy, and the deep belief that baking should be as approachable as it is beautiful. As the founder and editor-in-chief of Bake from Scratch, Brian has spent years demystifying pastries, breads, and cakes for home bakers around the world. Now, through a unique collaboration with Williams Sonoma, he's distilled his philosophy into a collection of cake pans and baking mixes that marry old-world beauty with modern ease.

The collection begins with pans—shapes that feel like heirlooms, though they're brand-new. Inspired by Brian's love of antique French copper molds, which he's collected from *brocantes* and flea markets throughout France for decades, the Avion and Chateau pans are objects of both performance and poetry. The Avion, with its swirling, turbine-like ridges, nods cheekily to Brian's former career as a flight attendant. The Chateau, with its regal scallops and ladyfinger-style sides, transports you straight to a grand French kitchen.

Yet for all their elegance, these pans aren't meant to languish on a shelf. "They feel like something you might have inherited—but didn't," Brian says. They are tools to be used, stories to be told in cake. Dust the cakes with confectioners' sugar for simplicity or dress them up in a glossy ganache.

If the pans lean toward the antique, the mixes lean straight into comfort. Each flavor was born from Brian's kitchen and his family's table. The Brownie Batter Cake Mix is indulgence incarnate—decadent, fudgy, with a molten center that captures the best bite of any pan of brownies. The Apple Cinnamon Doughnut Cake Mix is steeped in memory, inspired by his mother's October birthday, always celebrated with spiced cakes and apples. One bite, with its cinnamon-sugar crackle, is like a crisp fall morning in cake form.

The Milk and Cookies Cake Mix might be the most playful—a tender, chocolate chip-studded bake draped in milk glaze. It tastes like childhood, wrapped in a crumb, and, as Brian says, "like your favorite bakery cookie met a cake pan and said, 'Let's do something fun.'"

Cookies, too, get their due. The Celebration Sandwich Cookies—vanilla and almond sugar cookies flecked with rainbow sprinkles and sandwiched with buttercream—carry one of Brian's most personal stories. Weddings were central to his childhood (his mother was an organist, his aunt was a wedding coordinator), but as he grew older and questioned whether he'd ever have one himself, the joy of those occasions dimmed. Meeting his now-husband, Stephen, changed everything. Their wedding in Alabama was complete with the cake of

BLACK COCOA CAKE WITH VANILLA GLAZE

Makes 1 (10-cup) cake

A whisper of espresso powder in the cake batter sharpens the deep black cocoa notes, while buttermilk creates a plush texture. The bake starts in a cold oven, which might feel counterintuitive but has a purpose: The slow climb in heat allows the crumb to set gradually, preventing the dome from ballooning and encouraging an even rise that preserves the cake's sculptural silhouette. A snowy glaze plays beautifully against the cake's midnight color.

Cake:

- 1¼ cups (284 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 2½ cups (500 grams) granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs (200 grams), room temperature
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup (50 grams) black cocoa powder
- 2½ teaspoons (3 grams) instant espresso powder
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon (4 grams) baking powder
- ¾ cup (180 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature

Glaze:

- 1¼ cups (150 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) heavy whipping cream
- ½ teaspoon (3 grams) vanilla bean paste
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt

Garnish: sparkling sugar

1. For cake: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, espresso powder, salt, and baking powder. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition.
3. Spray a 10-cup fluted tube pan with baking spray with flour. Pour batter into prepared pan, smoothing top with a small offset spatula. Tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter a few times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
4. Place pan in a cold oven, and bake at 325°F (170°C) until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool in pan for 30 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack, and let cool completely.
5. For glaze: In a small bowl, whisk together all ingredients until smooth; spoon onto cooled cake. Garnish with sparkling sugar, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

> “My goal is to make baking easy and accessible. I hope this collection helps people experience joy.”

Shop the complete Bake from Scratch + Williams Sonoma Collection now at ***bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue.***

Browse even more cake recipes tailor-made for these special pans at ***bakefromscratch.com.***

Brian’s dreams. That memory, folded into this mix, is now a celebration within reach for anyone.

The other cookie mixes echo similar themes: Cinnamon Roll Cookies capture the gooey center bite of a cinnamon roll without yeast or rising time; Flourless Fudgy Cookies are a chocolate lover’s dream, chewy and truffle-like, rich with crackly tops. Each one is familiar, easy enough to whip up on a whim, but special enough to share proudly.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the mixes is how they feel like bringing the Bake from Scratch test kitchen home with you. Just as our test kitchen premeasures ingredients for bakers who join our immersive in-person retreats, these cake and cookie mixes are precisely crafted to remove the guesswork. They’re both foolproof and freeing—easy enough for beginners but polished enough to delight experienced bakers who simply want to get to the joy of mixing, baking, and sharing.

What makes the collection sing is the invitation to “bake it your own.” Brian emphasizes that these mixes and pans are starting points, not rigid formulas. Fold cinnamon chips into the doughnut cake or scatter crushed cookies onto the milk glaze. Baking, in Brian’s world, is about joy and play. It’s about allowing yourself to experiment, to put a bit of yourself into the recipe. Above all, Brian wants bakers of all ages and skill levels to feel the happiness he’s always found in the kitchen. “My goal,” he says, “is to make baking easy and accessible. I hope this collection helps people experience joy.”

And joy, really, is the through line: the joy of a pan that releases perfectly, a cake that tastes like your mother’s, a cookie that carries a personal love story. The Bake from Scratch + Williams Sonoma collaboration isn’t just about tools and mixes. It’s about memory and mood, about the stories you tell with butter, sugar, and flour—and the ones that will remain long after you’ve lingered over the last crumb.

SUGARED GINGERBREAD CAKE

Makes 1 (10-cup) cake

Gingerbread has centuries-deep roots, traveling from medieval European spice markets to colonial American hearths, and it has always been about abundance: lavish spice, deep caramel tones, and the kind of rich, clinging crumb that speaks of winter. A generous measure of molasses brings the treacly depth and almost smoky bitterness gingerbread is known for, and brewed coffee quietly amplifies it—coffee's bitterness sharpens and lifts the darker caramel notes so the cake tastes layered, never flat. Lemon zest might seem unexpected, but it's the hidden key: Its oils brighten the warming spices. Technique-wise, the batter is built in layers, alternating the dry mix with coffee so gluten develops gently and the crumb stays fine. The warm baked cake is brushed with butter and cloaked in spiced sugar, which sets into a shimmering crackle around the tender interior.

Cake:

- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 1¾ cups (385 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons (5 grams) tightly packed lemon zest
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- ½ cup (168 grams) unsulphured molasses
- 3 cups (375 grams) unbleached cake flour
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground nutmeg
- ¾ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon (1 gram) baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 cup (240 grams) coffee, room temperature

Topping:

- ¼ cup (56 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- ⅔ cup (132 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. For cake: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat softened butter, brown sugar, and lemon zest at medium-low speed just until combined. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until well combined after each addition. Beat in molasses. (Mixture may look slightly curdled at this point, but batter will come together.)
3. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking powder, nutmeg, salt, baking soda, cloves, and allspice. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with coffee, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition.
4. Spray a 10-cup fluted tube pan with baking spray with flour. Pour batter into prepared pan, smoothing top with a small offset spatula. Tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter a few times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Using a small offset spatula, gently loosen cake around center. Invert cake onto a wire rack.
6. For topping: Brush melted butter all over hot cake.
7. In a small bowl, whisk together granulated sugar, ginger, and cinnamon; sprinkle all over hot cake. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

PERFECT PAIRINGS

Taking inspiration from Every Day Coupetails*—the latest edition in the* Coupetails *series by Brian Hart Hoffman and Brooke Bell—we created these lively libations and savory snacks for all your seasonal soirées*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
COCKTAIL RECIPES BY BRIAN HART HOFFMAN AND BROOKE BELL
APPETIZER RECIPES BY AMANDA STABILE

→ For even more sipping and snacking ideas, check out *Every Day Coupetails* and *Holiday Coupetails*, available at *bakefromscratch.com/shop*.

CHIPOTLE, GOUDA, AND CHEDDAR BITES

Makes about 50 crackers

Say seasons greetings to the piquant flavors of these nibbles that are equal parts Southern cheese straws and cheese crackers. Dock marks in the center of each cracker are the key to maintaining a flaky, crunchy texture; as they bake, the butter melts and creates steam that causes the crackers to puff up, escape through the dock marks, and then flatten as they cool.

- **1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **½ teaspoon (1 gram) garlic powder**
- **½ teaspoon (1 gram) smoked paprika**
- **¼ teaspoon ground chipotle chile pepper**
- **¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- **½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **3 ounces (85 grams) smoked Gouda cheese, shredded**
- **3 ounces (85 grams) white Cheddar cheese, shredded**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour, salt, garlic powder, paprika, chipotle pepper, and black pepper until combined. Add butter and cheeses; pulse until a dough forms.
3. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and gently knead until dough comes together.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to ¼-inch thickness. Using a fluted pastry wheel, cut into 1-inch squares. Place 1 inch apart on prepared pan. Using a fork, dock centers.
5. Bake until golden brown and crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Let cool completely on pan on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

END OF THE JAM JAR MARTINI

Makes 1 serving

Promise us one thing: You'll never throw away a jam jar with a smidge of flavor in the bottom! It's a cocktail just waiting to be shaken . . . in the jar. We love Bonne Maman® for its quality and intense flavors. And if you've ever needed an excuse to purchase its epic Advent calendar, cocktail hour is your reason. Invite some friends over and let everyone shake up their cocktail of choice!
—Brian and Brooke

- **2 ounces jam or preserves, flavor of choice (still in jar)**
- **2 ounces vodka, chilled**
- **½ ounce fresh lemon juice**
- **½ ounce Simple Syrup (recipe follows)**

1. In jam jar with remaining preserves (see note), add vodka, lemon juice, and Simple Syrup. Add ice, and shake until cold. Strain into a coupe glass.

Note: *If your jam jar isn't empty, add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker.*

SIMPLE SYRUP

Makes about 1 cup

- **2 cups water**
- **1 cup granulated sugar**

1. In a medium saucepan, bring 2 cups water and sugar to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, and let cool completely. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

EVERYTHING BAGEL LINZERS

Makes about 18 sandwich cookies

Traditionally sweet Linzers go savory in these stackers. Buttery dough sprinkled with oniony, garlicky everything bagel seasoning is layered with whipped cream cheese for an intensely flavorful bite.

2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
¾ cup (170 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
¼ cup (60 grams) ice water
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
Everything bagel seasoning
6 ounces (170 grams) cream cheese, softened
¼ cup (60 grams) heavy whipping cream

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour and salt until combined. Add cold butter; pulse until butter is worked in and mixture has a slightly mealy texture. With processor running, add ¼ cup (60 grams) ice water in a slow, steady stream just until dough comes together.
2. Turn out dough, and shape into a disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 days.
3. Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to ⅜-inch thickness. Using a 2¼-inch round cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps once. Using a 1½-inch round cutter, cut centers from half of rounds. Using a fork, dock whole rounds. Place 1½ inches apart on prepared pan. Refrigerate until cold, about 20 minutes.
5. Preheat to 400°F (200°C).
6. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto dough. Sprinkle with everything seasoning.
7. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
8. In a medium bowl, whisk cream cheese until smooth. Add cream, and whisk until smooth. Spoon cream cheese mixture into a pastry bag, and cut a ½-inch opening in tip. Pipe onto flat side of whole rounds. Top with rounds with cutouts, flat side down. Best served same day as assembled. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

FRENCH-ISH MANHATTAN

Makes 1 serving

When my friend David Lebovitz published a French Manhattan recipe in his book Drinking French, *he made it with Cognac and included a cherry garnish for a nod to the original. In my French-ish version inspired by his, I use bourbon (because I'm a bourbon boy and love its sweetness) and kept the nod to France with the Cointreau and sweet vermouth. —Brian*

1½ ounces bourbon
1½ ounces sweet vermouth
½ ounce Cointreau or Grand Marnier
1 dash orange bitters
½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste
Garnish: maraschino cherry, charred orange rind

1. In a mixing glass, add bourbon, vermouth, Cointreau or Grand Marnier, bitters, and vanilla bean paste. Add ice, and stir until chilled. Strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with cherry and orange rind, if desired.

ROSEMARY AND GOAT CHEESE SANDWICH BITES

Makes about 18 sandwich cookies

Woodsy rosemary and a pinch of pepper impart an earthy flavor to these crackers, which are topped with a lightly sweetened whipped goat cheese. Their subtly sweet flavor pairs well with any cocktail that includes notes of citrus.

Cookies:

- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon (21 grams) honey
- 1 large egg (50 grams) room temperature
- 1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (2 grams) finely chopped fresh rosemary
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground black pepper

Filling:

- 4 ounces (113 grams) goat cheese, softened
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon (7 grams) honey

1. For cookies: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and honey at medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Beat in egg until combined.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, rosemary, salt, and pepper. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined and a dough forms.
3. Turn out dough onto a piece of plastic wrap, and shape into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until cold, at least 45 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to ¼-inch thickness. Using a 1½-inch round cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps once. Place 1½ inches apart on prepared pans.
6. Bake until surface is dry, edges are set, and bottoms are lightly browned, 10 to 13 minutes. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.
7. For filling: In another medium bowl, stir together goat cheese, cream, and honey with a rubber spatula until smooth and spreadable. Spoon into a pastry bag, and cut a ½-inch opening in tip. Pipe filling onto flat side of half of cookies. Top with remaining cookies, flat side down. Best served same day as assembled. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

BUTTERFLY

Makes 1 serving

This one's for you, Mom! My mom loved a Brandy Alexander (a creamy, dessert-style cocktail that's like a boozy milkshake), so Brooke and I decided to take that inspiration and create something even more "Mom-like" in her memory. Entrée Earl Grey tea, her absolute favorite. There is no doubt that butterflies will flutter around as this cocktail is made, Mom's sign to me that this would be her signature cocktail. And yes, Mom, this is more my kind of "teatime," and I'll always share it with you. —Brian

- 1 Earl Grey tea bag*
- 2 ounces Cognac
- 1 ounce dark crème de cacao liqueur
- 1 ounce heavy whipping cream
- Garnish: unsweetened cocoa powder

1. In a small bowl, combine tea bag and Cognac. Let steep for 30 minutes. Remove and discard tea bag, pressing bag to remove excess liquid.
2. In a cocktail shaker, add Cognac mixture, liqueur, and cream. Add ice, and shake until cold. Strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with cocoa powder, if desired.

**I used Brook37 The Atelier's Phyllis Earl Grey Bespoke Tea, a collaboration that honors my mother, Phyllis Hoffman DePiano. It's available at* victoriamag.com/products.

FIG, WALNUT, AND BLUE CHEESE THUMBPRINTS

Makes about 36 cookies

These soft and tender cookies feature a buttery, rich cookie base loaded with nutty, earthy flavor from tangy blue cheese and crunchy walnuts. With its contrasting sweetness, a dollop of honey-like fig preserves creates a harmonic trio of flavors.

- 1¼ cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon (1 gram) baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup (32 grams) crumbled blue cheese*
- ¼ cup (30 grams) finely chopped walnuts
- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
- ¼ cup (80 grams) fig preserves*

1. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt until combined. Add butter, cheese, and walnuts, and pulse until just combined and butter is the size of small peas. Add egg yolk, and pulse until fully combined and a dough forms around blade.
3. Using a 1½-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough, and roll into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Using your thumb, gently press a ½-inch-deep indentation into center of each ball. Spoon about 1 teaspoon (6.5 grams) preserves into each indentation. Freeze until firm, at least 15 minutes, or up to overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
5. Bake until edges are golden brown, 10 to 13 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used BelGioioso® Blue Cheese and Bonne Maman® Fig Preserves.*

SPICED LILLET ROUGE

Makes 1 serving

You might be familiar with Lillet Blanc, but Lillet Rouge offers a deeper, richer flavor full of dark fruits and delicate spices. Topped with Champagne, this cocktail is a bubbly delight perfect for the first cool days of fall. —Brooke

- 2 ounces Lillet Rouge
- 1 ounce Cointreau or Grand Marnier
- 1 ounce Spiced Simple Syrup (recipe follows)
- 2 ounces Champagne, chilled

Garnish: star anise

1. In a mixing glass, add Lillet Rouge, Cointreau or Grand Marnier, Spiced Simple Syrup, and ice. Stir until cold. Strain into a coupe glass. Top with Champagne. Garnish with star anise, if desired.

SPICED SIMPLE SYRUP

Makes about 1 cup

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 whole cloves
- 2 star anise
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 juniper berries

1. In a medium saucepan, bring 1 cup water and sugar to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, and add cloves, star anise, cinnamon, and juniper. Let cool completely. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

HERBED PINE NUT CRACKERS

Makes about 60 crackers

This is the kind of cracker where you can mix and match the main ingredients to truly bake it your own. Try Gruyère, thyme, and sage or Parmesan, rosemary, and oregano. The buttery, delicate flavor of pine nuts complements just about any cheese and herb combo you can think of.

1¼ cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
⅓ cup (43 grams) cooled lightly toasted pine nuts
½ cup (40 grams) finely shredded Manchego cheese
1 tablespoon (3 grams) finely chopped fresh chives
1 tablespoon (3 grams) finely chopped fresh basil
½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
⅓ cup (80 grams) water
3 tablespoons (42 grams) olive oil
Flaked sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour and pine nuts until nuts are coarsely chopped. Add cheese, chives, basil, and kosher salt, and pulse until combined. Add ⅓ cup (80 grams) water and oil, and pulse until combined and a dough forms. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured piece of parchment paper, and divide in half. Transfer half of dough to another piece of floured parchment paper.
3. Roll half of dough into a square that is at least 9 inches but no larger than 12 inches. (The larger your square, the thinner and crisper your crackers will be; see Note.) Using a sharp knife or pastry wheel, cut dough into 1½-inch diamonds. Slide parchment with crackers onto a rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle with sea salt. Repeat with remaining dough.
4. Bake, one pan at a time, until golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. (If the center crackers on the sheet are lighter than the edges, break apart the crackers, rearrange them, and bake for 2 to 3 minutes more.) Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Gently break apart crackers, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *This dough should be shaggy but easy to roll out. If you're having trouble or the dough is snapping back, let stand for 5 minutes and try again.*

STEPHEN'S GINGER MARTINI

Makes 1 serving

My husband, Stephen, has become a martini-drinking man over the last few years, and this creation is one of his best! Our neighbors Susan and Andy must have "shaker-level hearing," because once this drink is in the shaker, a social gathering isn't far behind. —Brian

2½ ounces vodka or London dry gin
1½ ounces Domaine de Caton ginger liqueur
1 splash Grand Marnier
1 splash Lillet Blanc
½ ounce white dry vermouth

1. In a cocktail shaker, add vodka or gin, ginger liqueur, Grand Marnier, and Lillet Blanc. Add ice, and shake until cold.
2. Pour vermouth into a chilled coupe glass and swirl; discard vermouth. Strain shaker mixture into prepared glass.

TRADITION *with a* TWIST

FOOD STYLING BY
GIOVANNA VAZQUEZ

Lemon-Poppy Seed Rugelach
PAGE 98

Five irresistible ways with rugelach

Rugelach are rooted in centuries of Ashkenazi Jewish baking. Their name comes from the Yiddish word "rugel," meaning "little twist," a nod to their rolled shape. Early versions were made with yeasted dough, similar to Hungarian *kifli*, and filled with jam or nuts. When Jewish immigrants brought the recipe to the US, butter and cream cheese were folded into the dough, creating the tender, flaky pastry we know today.

Traditionally, rugelach were holiday treats—coiled with poppy seeds, jam, or cinnamon sugar—but their adaptability has made them an all-season favorite. From classic raspberry-walnut to chocolate swirls and even savory spins, rugelach prove that the best traditions evolve. With tender doughs and endless possibilities, these five variations put fresh twists on a timeless pastry.

CLASSIC RUGELACH

Makes about 48 rugelach

The genius of rugelach lies in the dough: equal parts butter and cream cheese, pulsed just until combined. Cream cheese brings tenderness and a faint tang; butter delivers flake and flavor. The trick is restraint—overwork it and you lose the layers. Cold dough rolls neatly into rounds, ready to take on the filling. Walnuts, prunes, honey, and cinnamon make a mixture that's sticky, sharp, and textural. As the rugelach bake, the sugars seep into the seams, caramelizing into crisp edges, while the centers stay soft and jammy. It's balance in miniature: sweet, nutty, tangy, and flaky all at once.

- 1½ cups (153 grams) walnuts, finely chopped
- ½ cup (100 grams) prunes, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (85 grams) honey
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) fresh orange juice
- 1½ teaspoons (3 grams) ground cinnamon
- Rugelach Dough (recipe follows)
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. In a medium bowl, stir together walnuts, prunes, and granulated sugar. Stir in honey, orange juice, and cinnamon.

3. Divide Rugelach Dough into 4 portions (about 181 grams each). On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough into a 12x6-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. (Keep remaining dough refrigerated until ready to use.) Spread one-fourth of walnut mixture (about ½ cup or 110 grams) in an even layer onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border on one long side. Starting with long side opposite border, carefully roll up dough into a log. Using a sharp knife, cut log crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices. Place 1½ inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining dough and remaining filling.

4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Brush onto rugelach.

5. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Rugelach Dough

Makes 48 rugelach

- 2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- 1 (8-ounce) package (226 grams) cream cheese, cubed and softened

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour, sugar, and salt until combined. Add butter and cream cheese; pulse until a dough forms around blade. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, about 45 minutes.

PRO TIP: While a food processor is faster and more efficient, this dough can also be made in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment.

SPRINKLES RUGELACH

Makes 48 rugelach

Playful on the outside, precise at heart. The filling is simply cream cheese sweetened with sugar—it bakes into a soft, tangy seam inside the dough. The real trick is the sprinkles: Press them onto the egg-wash tops right before baking so they adhere without bleeding. In the oven, they toast ever so slightly, adding a faint crunch that offsets the pastry's tenderness. The result is childlike and deliberate: golden crescents freckled in color, sweet but not flat—a reminder that technique can hold whimsy and that rugelach are as good at sparking joy as they are at honoring tradition.

12 ounces (340 grams) cream cheese, softened
1⅓ cups (160 grams) confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste
Rugelach Dough (recipe on page 95)
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
Assorted holiday jimmies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, stir together cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla bean paste until smooth and combined.
3. Divide Rugelach Dough into 4 portions (about 181 grams each). On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough into a 10-inch circle. (Keep remaining dough refrigerated until ready to use.) Spread one-fourth of cream cheese mixture (about ⅓ cup or 122 grams) onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border around edges. Using a sharp knife or pastry cutter, cut dough into 12 triangles. Starting from base of each triangle, roll up triangle toward point, and place 1½ inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining dough and remaining cream cheese mixture.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto rugelach. Top with sprinkles.
5. Bake until lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

APRICOT–ALMOND RUGELACH

Makes 48 rugelach

This version edges toward pâtisserie. Almond paste, rolled thin between sheets of parchment, creates an even layer that melts into the pastry as it bakes. Apricot preserves goes on top, loosened with a little heat until spreadable. The key here is thinness—too much filling and the spirals burst; just enough and it bakes glossy and intact. Apricot's acidity cuts through the almond's richness, giving brightness against the tang of the dough. A quick egg wash before baking ensures golden crescents with a light sheen.

2 cups (240 grams) confectioners' sugar, plus more for dusting
1½ cups (336 grams) blanched almond flour
2 large egg whites (60 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (4 grams) almond extract
Rugelach Dough (recipe on page 95)
All-purpose flour, for dusting
1 cup (320 grams) apricot preserves*, divided
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
Sparkling sugar

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse confectioners' sugar and almond flour until combined. Add egg whites and almond extract; pulse until a somewhat smooth dough forms and mixture is combined. Turn out mixture onto a clean surface, and gently knead a few times until dough is smooth. Cover until ready to use, or wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for up to 6 weeks.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
3. Divide almond paste into 4 pieces (about 161 grams each.) Dust a sheet of parchment paper with confectioners' sugar; add one

portion of almond paste. Dust with confectioners' sugar, and top with another sheet of parchment paper. Press and roll almond paste into a 9-inch circle. (Keep remaining almond paste covered until ready to use.)
4. Divide Rugelach Dough into 4 portions (about 181 grams each). On a work surface lightly dusted with all-purpose flour, roll one portion of dough into a 10-inch circle. (Keep remaining dough refrigerated until ready to use.) Remove top parchment from almond paste, and invert onto dough. Remove top parchment. Spread ¼ cup preserves (about 80 grams) onto almond paste. Using a sharp knife or pastry cutter, cut dough into 12 triangles. Starting at base of each triangle, roll up triangle toward point, and place 1½ inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining almond paste, remaining dough, and remaining preserves.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto dough, and sprinkle with sparkling sugar.
6. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely on pans on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

**We used Bonne Maman® Apricot Preserves.*

LEMON–POPPY SEED RUGELACH

Makes 24 rugelach

Ground poppy seeds cook into a thick paste with milk, sugar, and lemon zest—a technique borrowed from Central European baking. The milk curbs the poppy's natural bitterness while citrus keeps the filling bright. This dough swaps cream cheese for shortening, which bakes up softer and more yielding, less tangy but beautifully tender, and keeps the dough pareve. Rolling the filling evenly is key; too much and it bursts, too little and it disappears. A lemon sugar coating creates a pleasant crunch after baking.

Filling:
- **½ cup (70 grams) poppy seeds**
- **⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar**
- **⅓ cup (80 grams) nondairy milk (see Note)**
- **2 teaspoons (2 grams) lemon zest**
- **1½ teaspoons (8 grams) fresh lemon juice**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**

Dough:
- **½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar**
- **½ cup (96 grams) all-vegetable shortening**
- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**
- **1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **¼ teaspoon (1 gram) baking powder**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**

Topping:
- **¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**
- **2 teaspoons (2 grams) lemon zest**
- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**
- **1 tablespoon (15 grams) water**

1. For filling: In a spice grinder, process poppy seeds until finely ground.
2. In a small saucepan, bring ground poppy seeds and all remaining filling ingredients to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, stirring constantly, until mixture becomes thick, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool completely before using. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5 days.
3. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat sugar and shortening at medium speed until smooth and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add egg, beating until combined and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to sugar mixture, beating until just combined and a dough forms. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or for up to 3 days.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Divide dough in half (about 214 grams each). Place one portion of dough on a lightly floured piece of parchment paper. (Keep remaining dough refrigerated until ready to use.) Lightly dust dough with flour, and top with another piece of parchment paper. Roll dough into a 13x6-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Remove top parchment.
7. Spread half of filling (about ¼ cup or 100 grams) onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border on one long side. Starting with long side opposite border, fold 1½ inches of dough inward. Continue to fold dough 1½ inches at a time, using parchment to help, until you have a log. Trim ½ inch off each end of log. Using a sharp knife, cut log crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices. Place 1½ inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining dough and remaining filling.
8. For topping: In a small bowl, whisk together sugar and lemon zest. In another small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Brush egg mixture onto rugelach; sprinkle with lemon sugar.
9. Bake until edges are lightly browned, about 20 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *Using nondairy milk keeps this recipe pareve, but you can use any milk you prefer.*

PRO TIP: The dough is very delicate and should be worked with quickly. Keeping it cold is very important. If the dough gets too soft after shaping, it will be hard to spread the poppy seed filling without pulling and tearing it. If this happens, return the rolled-out dough to the refrigerator for a few minutes to firm up.

YEASTED CHOCOLATE RUGELACH

Makes 20 rugelach

This yeasted dough produces a light, brioche-like pastry. Kneading develops gluten, giving it the strength to hold a rich chocolate filling without collapsing. The filling is a mix of butter, cocoa, sugar, and chocolate that's thinly spread so the dough can roll tightly. Once baked, the spirals are brushed with a simple syrup, which locks in moisture and gives shine. This rugelach requires patience, but the payoff is a treat halfway between babka and croissant.

Dough:

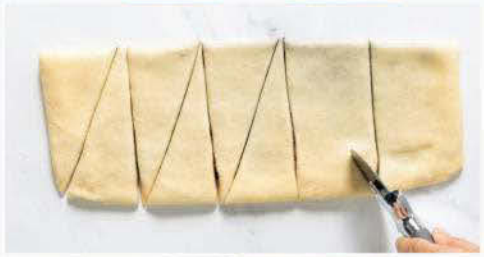
- **2½ cups (313 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (16 grams) all-purpose flour, divided**
- **¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**
- **2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast**
- **1½ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt**
- **⅓ cup (80 grams) water**
- **⅓ cup (80 grams) whole milk**
- **5 tablespoons (70 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**

Filling:

- **2 ounces (57 grams) 60% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped and melted**
- **¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **½ cup (60 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **¼ cup (20 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder**
- **½ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt**

- **1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature**
- **¼ cup (60 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided**
- **¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**

1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1 cup (125 grams) flour, granulated sugar, yeast, and salt by hand.
2. In a small saucepan, heat ⅓ cup (80 grams) water, milk, and butter over medium-low heat until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium-low speed until combined. Add egg, beating until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 1½ cups (188 grams) flour, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 8 to 10 minutes; add up to remaining 2 tablespoons (16 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Turn out dough onto a very lightly floured surface, and shape into a smooth round.
4. Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. For filling: In a medium bowl, stir together melted chocolate and butter until combined; stir in confectioners' sugar, cocoa, and salt until smooth.
6. Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
7. Punch down dough, and divide in half (about 314 grams each). On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough into a 13x11-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. (Keep remaining dough covered until ready to use.) Spread half of filling (about ¼ cup or 90 grams) in an even layer onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border on all sides.
8. Fold dough in half lengthwise, pressing edges to seal. Gently press dough into a 13x7-inch rectangle, making sure edges are sealed. Trim ¼ inch off sealed ends. Cut dough into 5 (2½-inch-wide) rectangles. Cut each rectangle diagonally into 2 triangles. Gently stretch 1 triangle to even out the length of the two sides. Starting from base, roll up triangle toward point. (Do not roll too tightly, or it will fall over while proofing or baking.) Repeat with remaining triangles, placing 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining dough and remaining filling. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 30 to 45 minutes.
9. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
10. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; gently brush onto dough.
11. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking.
12. Meanwhile, in a small microwave-safe bowl, heat granulated sugar and remaining ¼ cup (60 grams) water on high in 15-second intervals, stirring between each, until sugar dissolves. Let cool to room temperature.
13. Remove rugelach from oven, and immediately and generously brush with cooled syrup. (You should use most of the syrup.) Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days. b



cover
RECIPE

A TASTE OF *Nostalgia*

A visit to Claxton Bakery in the "fruitcake capital of the world"

BY SHELBY DUFFY / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN O'HAGAN

GO THERE

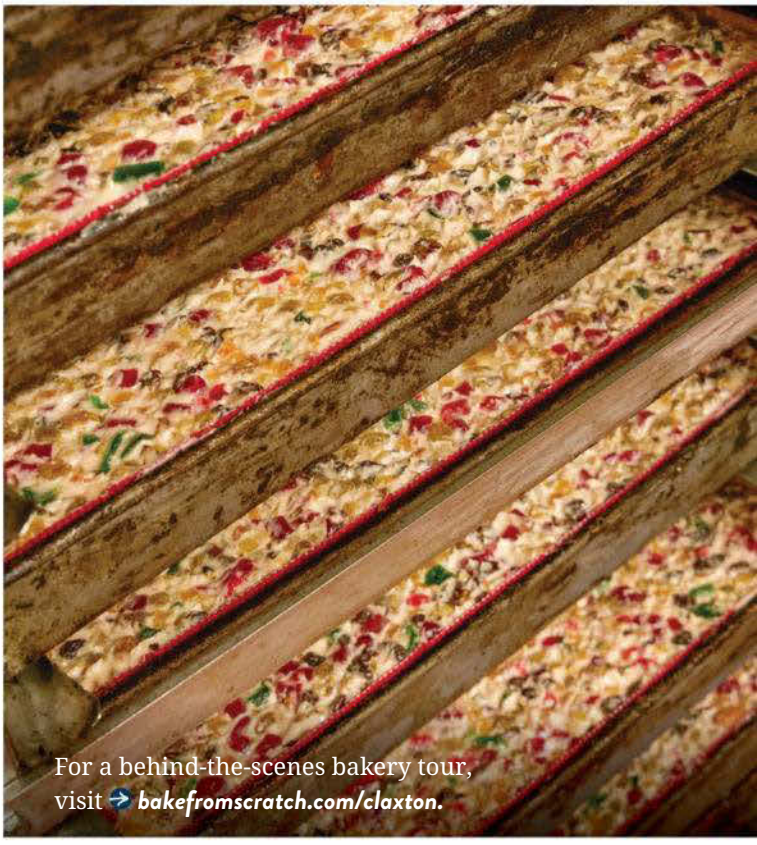
Claxton Bakery
203 W. Main St.
Claxton, Georgia
claxtonfruitcake.com

The holiday season goes hand in hand with sweet treats. I'm often overcome with fond memories of the irresistible aromas of cinnamon and brown sugar drifting through the house as my mom baked away. She stuffed our stockings with holiday sweets and chocolate bars and tucked boxes of chocolate-covered cherries under the tree. But there was always one Christmas dessert I didn't quite know what to do with: fruitcake.

For many years, I avoided trying the classic Christmas cake, thinking of it as old and outdated. It wasn't until I was an adult, when I had vowed to rid myself of the "picky" title I was given as a young child, that I found the courage to try the cake I had been dodging for so long. Suddenly, the old-fashioned dessert made sense: rich and buttery cake, bursts of bright flavor from chewy dried fruits, spices that lingered on my tongue after the first bite, all wrapped together with the delicate and warm roundness of rum. It was a complex flavor profile that I couldn't fully appreciate as a child and can't resist as an adult.

To learn more about these time-honored treats, it only made sense to visit Claxton, Georgia—the "fruitcake capital of the world" and home of the 115-year-old Claxton Bakery, renowned for its traditional fruitcakes. It was founded in 1910 by Savino Tos, an Italian pastry maker who immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s and eventually settled in Claxton after being drawn in by the friendly locals and realizing that the small agricultural town didn't have a bakery. Though he offered customers a selection of delicious pastries and homemade ice cream, many folks looked forward to fall when Savino would create his own specialty fruitcakes. The cakes were based on his favorite recipe for pound cake and incorporated a mixture of raisins, pecans, and candied fruits. This sweet cake soon became a beloved holiday treat.

In 1945, Savino retired, passing the bakery on to long-standing employee Albert Parker. Albert soon began to search for ways to grow the company, recognizing that many items formerly available only at a local bakery were suddenly popping up in grocery stores across the country. Albert decided it was time to shift his focus to large-scale production of fruitcakes, enabling the company to distribute them to a much wider audience. Inspired by the nostalgia of Southern tradition, he created packaging emblazoned with the now-iconic depiction of a horse-drawn buggy, highlighting the company's traditional values, with festive red and white stripes that evoke the holidays as well as making the cakes easy to recognize.



For a behind-the-scenes bakery tour, visit → ***bakefromscratch.com/claxton.***

There's no wrong way to enjoy fruitcake, according to Paula Claxton, part of the Claxton Bakery family. She loves a warm slice with a scoop of ice cream or a drizzle of decadent chocolate sauce —and even cooked until crisp with pat of butter in a skillet.

Albert and the bakery continued to embrace tradition, making few changes along the way. The current fruitcake recipe is a modern adaptation of Savino's original formula and focuses on a higher ratio of fruits and nuts. In fact, their "light" cakes are 70 percent fruit and nuts, with one bite revealing crunchy, earthy nuts; chewy papaya, pineapple, and orange; and rich raisins and cherries. They also offer a "dark" fruitcake, which ups the blend of spices and incorporates ribbons of rich molasses straight into the cake batter for a richer taste. Both light and dark flavors are available as loaves, 1- and 2-pound cakes, and by the slice, called "Clax Snax."

Albert's family continues to run the business, and though little has changed their celebrated bakes, they have experienced steady, sustained growth. During the busy baking season, the small-town bakery welcomes more than 100 seasonal employees, who work alongside the year-round staff to prep, bake, package, and ship all its fruitcakes. Claxton Bakery produces around 3 million pounds of fruitcakes a year, and during its busy season, which spans from mid-August through December, upward of 65,000 pounds of cake a day can be baked. Its products can be purchased at most major grocery stores in the United States, online, and at its local retail store.

As the holiday season draws near, with gloomy afternoons that too quickly turn into dark, frigid evenings, I can't help but to reminisce on some of my most fond memories. Being ushered through a bustling mall filled with people who are all searching for the perfect gifts; a flurry of cold wind tousling my hair as I gaze up at twinkling lights set against a dark, snow-dotted sky; and the faint, soothing sound of Christmas jazz humming in the background of grocery stores as I walk past tables crammed with cellophane baggies of cutout cookies and a display filled with red- and white-striped boxes flaunting loaves of jewel-toned speckled cakes.

MINI FRUITCAKES

Makes 6 mini Bundt cakes

Claxton's single-serve Clax Snax inspired us to make our own individual fruitcakes. A pound cake-like batter is the base for a blend of aromatic spices, tart fruit pieces, and bright fresh citrus. These cakes are topped with a generous brush of spirits to ensure they're luxuriously moist, and a light snow of confectioners' sugar is an easy finishing touch to serve.

- 12 ounces (340 grams) chopped assorted dried fruit (see Note)
- ¼ cup (60 grams) fresh orange juice
- 6 tablespoons (90 grams) brandy or rum, divided
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup (110 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon (6 grams) orange zest
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
- 1 cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon (3 grams) baking powder
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon (1 gram) baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ cup (28 grams) toasted pecans, finely chopped

Garnish: confectioners' sugar

Find the mini Bundt pan we used for these cakes at **bakefromscratch.com/shop.**

1. In a medium bowl, stir together dried fruit, orange juice, and 3 tablespoons (45 grams) brandy or rum. Cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let stand at room temperature, stirring occasionally, until fruit is soft and has absorbed all (or nearly all) liquid, 12 to 24 hours.

2. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, brown sugar, and orange zest at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Add egg, and beat at low speed until just combined, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla.

4. In another medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, and nutmeg. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until just combined. Add pecans and fruit mixture and any unabsorbed liquid; fold with a rubber spatula until well combined. (It will seem like a lot of fruit at first, but batter will come together.)

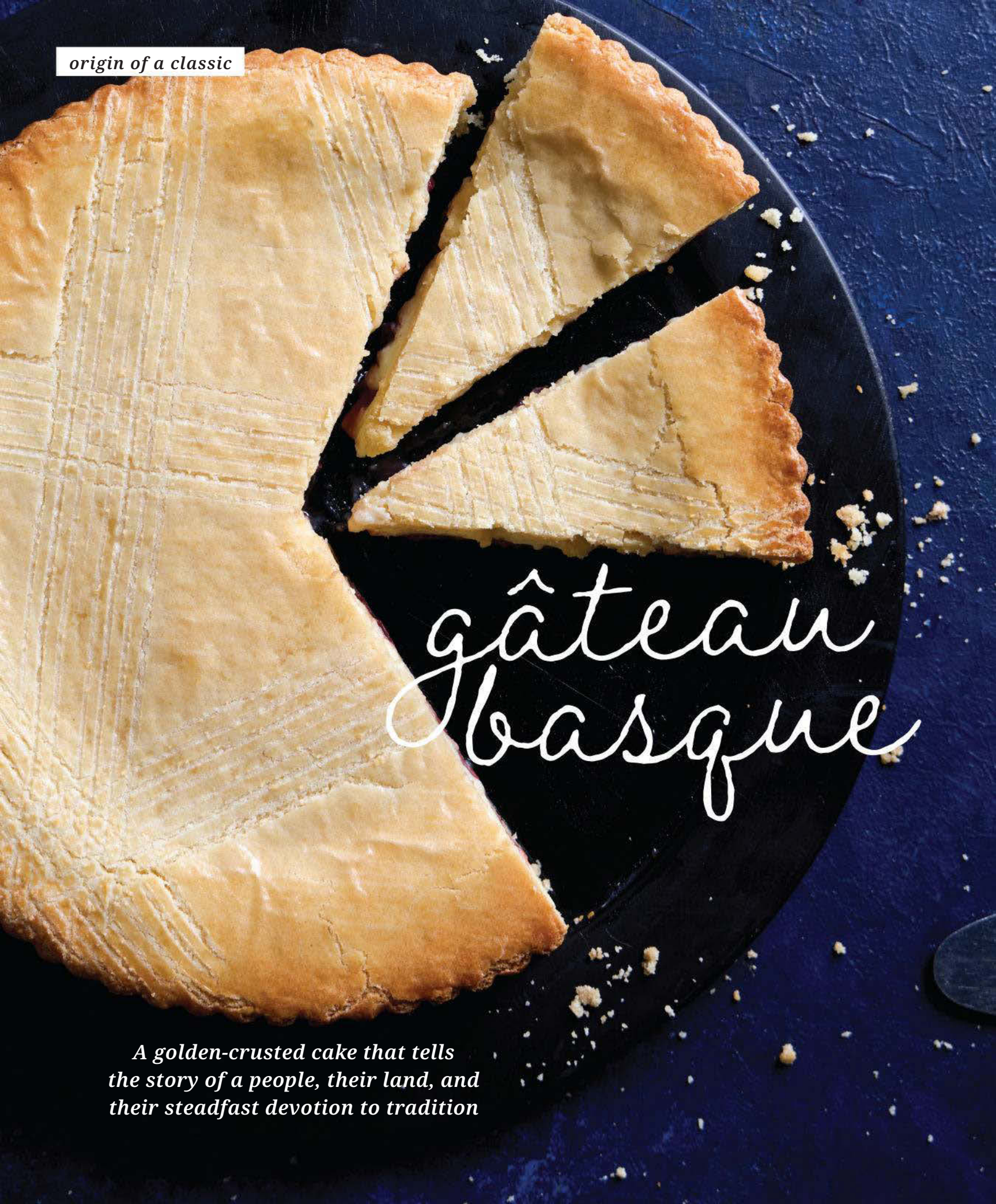
5. Spray a 6-well mini Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Divide batter among prepared wells (about ½ cup or 145 grams each), spreading smooth. Firmly tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter a few times to settle batter and release any large air bubbles.

6. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers at least 205°F (96°C), about 35 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes.

7. Using a wooden skewer or pick, poke holes all over surface of cakes. Brush 1½ tablespoons (22.5 grams) brandy or rum onto cakes. Let stand until absorbed, about 5 minutes.

8. Invert cakes onto a wire rack. Brush remaining 1½ tablespoons (22.5 grams) brandy or rum onto cakes. Let cool completely on rack. Garnish with confectioners' sugar just before serving, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Note: *Use any blend of dried fruit you like. We used cherries, apricots, cranberries, and raisins; prunes, dates, candied citrus peel, candied ginger, currants, and candied pineapple also make great inclusions. When using larger fruit, make sure to cut it to the size of the smaller fruit before measuring.*



gâteau basque

A golden-crusted cake that tells the story of a people, their land, and their steadfast devotion to tradition

If you travel to the southwest corner of France, where the Pyrenees tumble down to the Atlantic, you'll find Basque Country. Rugged and simple, it's a land of whitewashed houses with red shutters and timbering, rolling green hills dotted with sheep, and a language spoken nowhere else on earth. If you're lucky, you'll find its emblematic sweet in a bakery window or on a family table—a cake that looks plain but is anything but.

Round and golden, its top sometimes scored with the tines of a fork or marked with the curved arms of the Basque cross, gâteau Basque holds more than jam or cream inside—it holds history. In the Basque language, it is called *etxeko biskotxa*, the "cake of the house," and that name says everything.

The cake's earliest version appeared in the 18th century. These cakes were sturdy—more bread than cake—and were called *biskotxak* (or *bistochak*). They were often filled with cherry preserves from the orchards of Itxassou. A local variety of black cherry—the Xapata—ripens for only a few weeks in June, yet the harvest is so abundant, jars of preserves last through the year. The cake itself is thought to have originated along the winding Nivelle River valley, where these cherries flourish.

But the story most often told begins in Cambo-les-Bains, a spa town in the foothills of the Pyrenees. In the early 1800s, Marianne Hirigoyen—credited with popularizing gâteau Basque—sold cakes made with her mother's recipe at the markets of Bayonne. Its popularity grew so quickly that she opened her own pastry shop in Cambo-les-Bains in the 1830s. Her daughters carried the recipe forward, and what began as a family treat grew into a source of regional pride.

At its heart, gâteau Basque is about contrasts. The crust is firm, somewhere between shortbread and tart shell. The ingredients are simple—flour, butter, sugar, eggs—and combine into something greater than the sum of its parts: buttery yet restrained, tender yet sturdy enough to hold its filling. Traditionally, there are two classic options: a silken pastry cream scented with vanilla, or black cherry jam, thick and tangy, made with the prized Itxassou cherries that grow on the slopes of the Basque hills. Pastry cream became common in the 19th century as French pâtisserie techniques blended with Basque tradition, giving the cake a dual identity.

Tradition says that when the filling is pastry cream, the top is crosshatched with a fork's tines; when it is cherry jam, the top is marked with the *lauburu*, the four-armed Basque cross. Today, both versions are beloved—even layered together—and people still debate, with Basque passion, which is the "true" gâteau. Such debates, carried on with affection as much as conviction, prove just how deeply the cake is loved.

For generations, gâteau Basque was baked at home on Sundays, made after Mass and served in generous slices that offered a sense of steadiness and comfort to the table. Over time, it moved into the public square—fêtes, festivals, and gatherings where coffee flowed and plates of gâteau circulated freely. Today, the cake is honored with its own museum—Le Musée du Gâteau Basque—in the village of Sare, and each October, Cambo-les-Bains celebrates a festival in its honor, the streets filling with music, laughter, and the scent of butter and sugar.

When you bake gâteau Basque at home, think of the way it embodies the spirit of a people in something so deceptively simple. Keep in mind how it asks for patience—chill the dough, make the filling, allowing layers to meld and anticipation to build. When you finally cut into the first slice—the crust giving way and the filling revealed—you'll understand why it has lasted for generations. It is more than a cake; it is a story of belonging, a promise of home, and a reminder that the simplest things are often the ones that endure.

GÂTEAU BASQUE

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake

Gâteau Basque has been the pride of Basque Country since the 18th century. This version layers two classic fillings—silky pastry cream and tart black cherry preserves—inside a crisp, cookie-like crust. The dough acts more like a shortbread-style pastry than cake batter: short, buttery, and just pliable enough to roll. Chilling is essential—it keeps the fat firm and ensures clean edges and a tender bite once baked. Though the final product is best enjoyed the day it's made, the components are wonderfully make-ahead–friendly: The dough can rest in the refrigerator for a few days, and the pastry cream can be prepared the day before. Once assembled, the cake is chilled, brushed with egg wash, and scored with its signature crosshatch—an unmistakable Basque flourish.

Dough:

¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, softened
1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract
2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt
½ teaspoon (3 grams) baking powder

Filling:

2¼ cups (540 grams) whole milk
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped and reserved
½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
¼ cup (32 grams) cornstarch
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
2 large egg yolks (37 grams), room temperature
3 tablespoons (42 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and room temperature
⅓ cup (107 grams) cherry preserves*

1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water

1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in egg, egg yolk, and vanilla extract until combined, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and baking powder. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until just combined.
3. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and press dough together 1 or 2 times as needed. Divide dough in half (about 372 grams each). Shape each portion into a disk, and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 2 months. Let frozen dough thaw overnight in refrigerator before using.
4. For filling: In a medium saucepan, heat milk and reserved vanilla seeds over medium heat just until steaming. (Do not boil.)
5. In another medium bowl, whisk together sugar, cornstarch, eggs, and egg yolks until smooth. Slowly add hot milk mixture, whisking constantly. Pour sugar mixture into saucepan, and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thick and bubbling, 2 to 3 minutes.
6. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a large heatproof bowl, discarding solids. Whisk in butter until melted and well combined. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pastry cream to prevent a skin from forming. Let cool completely before using, about 1 hour, or refrigerate until ready to use.
7. On a lightly floured piece of parchment paper, roll half of dough into an 11-inch circle (about ¼ inch thick). Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes. (Dough is soft and will become fragile if it gets too warm, so work quickly and refrigerate longer if needed.)
8. Lightly spray a 10-inch round fluted removable-bottom tart pan with baking spray with flour; using a pastry brush, wipe any excess. Transfer 1 dough circle to prepared pan, gently pressing into bottom and up and over sides.
9. Gently whisk pastry cream until smooth; spoon into a pastry bag, and cut a ½-inch opening in tip. Pipe a ½-inch border around inside perimeter of prepared crust. Spoon preserves into bottom of crust within border. Pipe remaining pastry cream onto preserves, spreading smooth with an offset spatula.
10. Gently place remaining dough circle on filling, gently pressing edges to seal. Trim off excess dough by rolling your rolling pin over edges. (This will seal edges.)
11. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto crust. Refrigerate until cold, about 30 minutes.
12. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
13. Using a fork, gently score a pattern into top crust, being careful not to break through dough.
14. Bake until golden brown, 45 to 50 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Remove from pan before serving. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Bonne Maman® Cherry Preserves.*

The chocolaty nostalgia of Oreo cookies meets tender, flaky scones

DEEP, DARK DELIGHT

BLACK COCOA SCONES

Makes 16 small scones

Black cocoa powder adds an unmistakable decadence to any baked good. The mysterious dark color lures you in while the smooth, mellow chocolaty flavor adds nuance, and it perfectly balances out the sweet vanilla glaze and bits of melty chocolate studding these miniature scones. Although they may look like lumps of coal, these decadent bites are sure to earn a spot at the top of your "nice list."

- **2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour***
- **½ cup (43 grams) black cocoa powder**
- **⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar**
- **4 teaspoons (20 grams) baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **½ cup (113 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed**
- **4 ounces (113 grams) semisweet chocolate, chopped**
- **1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream**
- **3 teaspoons (18 grams) vanilla bean paste, divided**
- **1¼ cups (150 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **2 tablespoons (30 grams) water**

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender or 2 forks, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Stir in chocolate. Add cold cream and 2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste, and stir with a fork until a shaggy dough forms. Gently knead dough in bowl just until dough comes together and no dry streaks remain.
3. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and pat into an 8-inch square (about ¾ inch thick). Using a sharp knife, cut into 4 squares. Cut each square diagonally to create 4 triangles. Place 1½ inches apart on prepared pan. Freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
5. Bake until edges are set, surface is dry, and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 12 to 15 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool on a wire rack for 20 minutes.
6. In another medium bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar, 2 tablespoons (30 grams) water, and remaining 1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste until smooth; spoon onto scones. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**b*We used Bob's Red Mill® Unbleached White All-Purpose Flour.*

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brand standards

***Bake from Scratch* uses the following ingredients, equipment, and products in developing and testing all our recipes:**
European-style butter
Full-fat dairy products
Diamond Crystal kosher salt
Conventional-bake ovens
Digital thermometers and scales
KitchenAid Artisan stand mixers
Williams Sonoma Goldtouch bakeware

Although both weight and volume measurements are included, readers are strongly encouraged to measure by weight.

***Bake from Scratch* Official Test Kitchen Partners**
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credits

Page 22—Edd Kimber photo by Simon Kimber.
Page 113—Photo by Matthew Septimus.

corrections

JULY/AUGUST 2025
Birthday Cake Cookies, page 69
Eggs in ingredients should be changed to 1 large egg (50 grams) and 1 large egg yolk (18 grams).

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025
Quince, Toasted Milk, and Verjus Tart, page 65
In step 3 of Poached Quince, the oven temperature should be 130°C (265°F).

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2026

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Scottish Highlands
March 2–10 & March 10–18

AMALFI COAST AND CAPRI, ITALY
April 10–16

PARIS AND NORMANDY, FRANCE
April 19–24

DANUBE RIVER CRUISE
May31–June7

MAINE
July 29–August 2
& August 3–7

THE COTSWOLDS, ENGLAND
September

JAPAN
October 4–14 & 14–24

Fall Baking in
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA TK
September 25–28

Swedish Holiday Baking
with Fanny Zanotti in
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA TK
November 6–9

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Chocolate

From ganache to tempering, here's some sweet science to help you master chocolate

BY ROSE LEVY BERANBAUM

Find Rose on Instagram at @realbakingwithrose and at *realbakingwithrose.com*.

This is the story of my love affair with chocolate, starting in the dark ages when there were only two brands, neither one extraordinary, and evolving to a huge variety and enlightened chocolate bliss. It's hard to imagine a time when ganache (the base of chocolate truffles and the ultimate cake frosting) was a mystery to most.

Once ganache became a more recognized term, conventional theory stated that it had to be made in a double boiler and could not be made in a food processor. This divine mixture of heavy cream and dark chocolate, if overheated, would often separate, with the cocoa butter rising to the top, and could not be reincorporated. Never one to accept "could nots," I found a fail-proof way to make ganache in the food processor by processing the chocolate into fine granules and then adding the cream, just at the boiling point, with the motor on. Perfection.

But my most important discovery happened many books later when people discovered higher-cacao-percentage chocolates, and the ganache turned into a solid mass. In my revision of *The Cake Bible*, I list the extra amount of cream needed at each cacao percentage level. Personally, I prefer the higher percentage to temper things like toffee that are intrinsically sweet.

Without knowing the cacao percentage in chocolate, it's nearly impossible to create new recipes. When I became a consultant for the new-at-that-time chocolate company Scharffen Berger, I impressed upon them the importance of listing the percentage of cacao, and it was the first American company ever to do so.

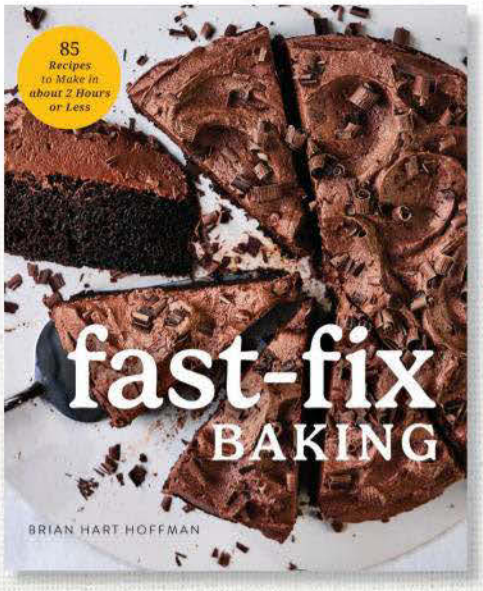
Chocolate can be very temperamental. Melting it at temperatures above 92°F (33°C) results in loss of flavor and dulls its glow. Tempering chocolate required the use of a highly accurate thermometer, which was not available until I designed a chocolate thermometer accurate to a fraction of a degree (now replaced by the ThermoPen® ONE by ThermoWorks). And then I discovered the quick tempering method, which doesn't produce quite as high a gloss but is convenient because it does not require a thermometer.

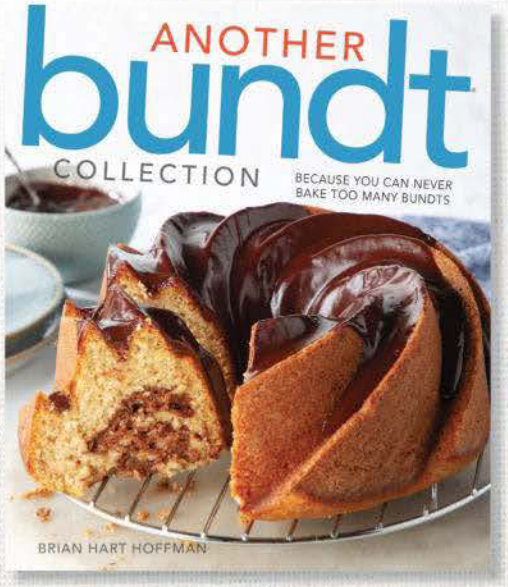
White chocolate—the misunderstood member of the chocolate family—eventually came into its own and is recognized as such, provided it contains cocoa butter. Most people thought they hated white chocolate because there is no cacao to temper its sweetness, but I found that when it is added to a cake batter, its cocoa butter, milk solids, and lecithin contribute to a higher rise, a moister and more velvety texture, and a longer shelf-life. Since white chocolate usually contains about one-third sugar, I reduce the amount of sugar in the cake batter to compensate.

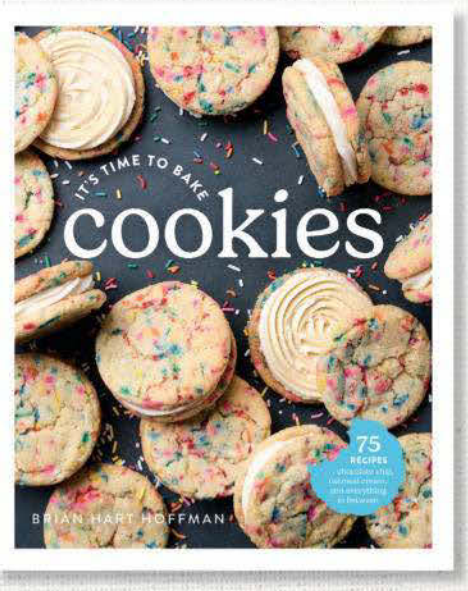
Dark chocolate denatures when overheated, which is why cocoa is superior for cake batter. And when cocoa is hydrated with boiling water, it bursts the cell membrane of each grain to release the full flavor components.

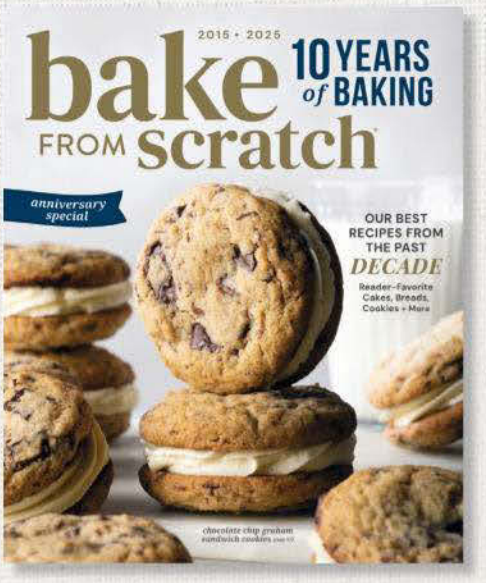
After years of research and experimentation, when I consulted for Procter & Gamble on its cake mix, I was able to address the question of how to make chocolate taste the most intense. Here's how: Make a chocolate cake containing cocoa powder and butter. Punch holes in it after baking and do an infusion of a ganache that is thin enough to penetrate the cake's structure (by weight, double cream to chocolate), which will make it extra moist, fudgy, and flavorful since the chocolate will not be baked in the cake. Then store it in a room lined with chocolate because chocolate picks up surrounding aromas. And finally, have people eat it in that room because what you smell intensifies the flavor of what you taste. And this is the ultimate way to make the most of chocolate.

Bake Every Season in Style with Some of Our Favorites





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